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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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

Budget 2026 Package: Vote Conservation

On 7 May 2026, Cabinet:

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

1 **approved** the Budget initiatives for the above Vote for inclusion in the 2026 Budget package, as listed in the summary tables below and detailed in the attached initiative documents:

Summary of initiatives:

Operating Initiatives (Impact on Operating Balance)

		$m - increase/(decrease)				
Initiative ID	**Initiative Name**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
17162	Baseline Savings - Scaling of Asset Maintenance Delivery	-	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)
17163	Baseline Savings - Scaling of IT Modernisation Programme	-	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)
17159	Baseline Savings - Scaling of National Predator Control Programme	-	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)
17160	Baseline Savings - Policy Capacity Reduction and Pausing Stewardship Land Reclassification	-	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)
17165	Stafford v Attorney-General - Implications for the Department of Conservation	2.100	1.020	0.941	0.962	0.983^
Total Operating		**2.100**	**(8.408)**	**(8.487)**	**(8.466)**	**(8.445)**

^ has irregular outyears.

Summary of contingency initiative:

Operating Contingency

		$m - increase/(decrease)				
Initiative ID	**Initiative Name**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
17587	Stafford v Attorney-General - Implications for the Department of Conservation Tagged Contingency	-	3.600	0.056	0.060	0.064^
Total Operating		**-**	**3.600**	**0.056**	**0.060**	**0.064**

^ has irregular outyears.

Diana Hawker
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Initiative No: 17162

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Baseline Savings - Scaling of Asset Maintenance Delivery

Description: This savings initiative delivers on the baseline reduction target for the Department of Conservation via reduced asset maintenance expenditure and scaling of Material Damage and Business Interruption insurance cover. The Department of Conservation will instead partially self-insure for loss and damages, whilst non-safety-related asset maintenance will be deferred and delivered over a longer term.

Appropriation Changes

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Operating Balance Impact*	-	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**

* Unless non-cash, will also impact net core Crown debt.

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Services for Conservation (MCA)					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Management of Recreational Opportunities (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)
Total Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Services for Conservation (MCA)	-	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)	(1.865)
Total Operating	**-**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**	**(1.865)**

Initiative No: 17163

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Baseline Savings - Scaling of IT Modernisation Programme

Description: This savings initiative delivers on the baseline reduction target for the Department of Conservation and will be achieved via cancellation and deferral of lower-priority IT investments planned to address technology debt.

Appropriation Changes

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Operating Balance Impact*	-	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**

* Unless non-cash, will also impact net core Crown debt.

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Services for Conservation (MCA)					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Conservation with the Community (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.547)	(0.547)	(0.547)	(0.547)
Crown Contribution to Regional Pest Management (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Management of Historic Heritage (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.149)
Management of Natural Heritage (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(2.757)	(2.757)	(2.757)	(2.757)
Management of Recreational Opportunities (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(1.532)	(1.532)	(1.532)	(1.532)
Statutory Planning, Services to Ministers and Statutory Bodies (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Total Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Services for Conservation (MCA)	-	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)	(5.093)
Total Operating	**-**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**	**(5.093)**

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Baseline Savings - Scaling of National Predator Control Programme

Description: This savings initiative delivers on the baseline reduction for the Department of Conservation. It stops ongoing predator control delivered by the Department of Conservation at [33]

Appropriation Changes

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Operating Balance Impact*	-	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**

* Unless non-cash, will also impact net core Crown debt.

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Services for Conservation (MCA)					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Management of Natural Heritage (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)
Total Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Services for Conservation (MCA)	-	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)	(1.870)
Total Operating	**-**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**	**(1.870)**

Initiative No: 17160

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Baseline Savings - Policy Capacity Reduction and Pausing Stewardship Land Reclassification

Description: This savings initiative delivers on the baseline reduction target for the Department of Conservation through a reduction in contractor and consultant expenditure across policy, legal, and Treaty of Waitangi negotiation directorates. It also returns funding held for further stewardship land reclassification investigations and decisions as no further work is currently planned. [33]

Appropriation Changes

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Operating Balance Impact*	-	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**

* Unless non-cash, will also impact net core Crown debt.

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Services for Conservation (MCA)					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Policy Advice (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)
Statutory Planning, Services to Ministers and Statutory Bodies (funded by revenue Crown)	-	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)
Total Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Services for Conservation (MCA)	-	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)	(0.600)
Total Operating	**-**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**	**(0.600)**

Initiative No: 17165

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Stafford v Attorney-General - Implications for the Department of Conservation

Description: This initiative provides funding to address implementation costs for the Department of Conservation arising from the resolution agreement for the Stafford v Attorney-General High Court case. This funding will ensure the continued seamless operation of the Abel Tasman Great Walk and other visitor experiences affected by the litigation.

Appropriation Changes

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Operating Balance Impact*	2.100	1.020	0.941	0.962	0.983
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**2.100**	**1.020**	**0.941**	**0.962**	**0.983**

* Unless non-cash, will also impact net core Crown debt.

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30 & Outyears**
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Services for Conservation (MCA)					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Management of Recreational Opportunities (funded by revenue Crown)	2.100	1.020	0.941	0.962	0.983
Total Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Services for Conservation (MCA)	2.100	1.020	0.941	0.962	0.983
Total Operating	**2.100**	**1.020**	**0.941**	**0.962**	**0.983**

Additional Recommendations

2 **agreed** that implementation costs be indexed annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with current forecast expenditure based on an assumed average CPI rate of 2.5 percent per annum;

3 **agreed** that any underspend in survey activities and license fees in the *Services for Conservation Multi-Category Appropriation* in 2025/26 may be transferred to 2026/27;

4 **authorised** the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Conservation jointly to agree the final amount to be transferred, following completion of the 2025/26 audited financial statements, with no impact on the operating balance and/or net core Crown debt across the forecast period;

5 **noted** that this initiative relates to Initiative 17587 in Vote Conservation;

Vote: Conservation

Appropriation Administrator: Department of Conservation

Title: Stafford v Attorney-General - Implications for the Department of Conservation Tagged Contingency

Description: This initiative establishes a tagged contingency to address uncertain implementation costs for the Department of Conservation arising from the resolution agreement for the Stafford v Attorney-General High Court case. This funding will ensure the continued seamless operation of the Abel Tasman Great Walk and other visitor experiences affected by the litigation.

Tagged Contingency

	$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Contingency	-	3.600	0.056	0.060	0.064
Capital Contingency	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**3.600**	**0.056**	**0.060**	**0.064**

Additional Recommendations

6 **agreed** that implementation costs in the outyears be indexed to increase annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with current forecast expenditure based on an assumed average CPI rate of 2.5 percent per annum;

7 **authorised** the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Conservation to jointly draw down funding from the above tagged contingency, subject to confirmation of survey and other implementation costs;

8 **agreed** that the expiry date for the above tagged contingency be 31 March 2027;

9 **noted** that this initiative relates to Initiative 17165 in Vote Conservation.