

The Treasury

Budget 2026 Information Release

September 2026

This document has been proactively released and is available on:

- The Budget website from September 2026 to May 2027 only at: <https://budget.govt.nz/information-release/2026>, and on
- The Treasury website from later in 2026 at: <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/budgets/budget-2026-information-release>

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).

Copyright and Licensing

Cabinet material and advice to Ministers from the Treasury and other public service departments are © **Crown copyright** but are licensed for re-use under **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)** [<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>].

For material created by other parties, copyright is held by them and they must be consulted on the licensing terms that they apply to their material.

Accessibility

The Treasury can provide an alternate HTML version of this material if requested. Please cite this document's title or PDF file name when you email a request to information@treasury.govt.nz.



Cabinet

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 2026 Package: Vote Justice

On 7 May 2026, Cabinet:

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Justice

- 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)

Initiative ID	Initiative Name	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
17095	Legal Aid - Demand-Driven Cost Pressures	-	30.280	-	-	-
17633	Resource Management Reform - Planning Tribunal Justice-related costs	-	0.363	1.090	1.090	1.090
17367	Term of Parliament Referendum	(8.382)	(16.618)	-	-	-
Total Operating		(8.382)	14.025	1.090	1.090	1.090

Capital Initiative (Impact on Debt)

Initiative ID	Initiative Name	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
17633	Resource Management Reform - Planning Tribunal Justice-related costs	-	5.411	8.005	-	-
Total Capital		-	5.411	8.005	-	-

Summary of contingency initiatives:**Operating Contingencies**

Initiative ID	Initiative Name	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
17352	Rotorua Courthouses - Infrastructure for Growth^	-	-	0.233	1.399	4.895
17061	Firearms Reform – Tagged Contingency for ICT Modernisation	[38]				
17637	Firearms – Implementing the New Arms Act and Establishing Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand	-	10.804	20.417	9.962	3.720
Total Operating		[38]				

^ has irregular outyears

Capital Contingency

Initiative ID	Initiative Name	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
17352	Rotorua Courthouses - Infrastructure for Growth	-	4.662	23.312	69.936	2.090
Total Capital		-	4.662	23.312	69.936	2.090

Diana Hawker
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Justice

Title: Legal Aid - Demand-Driven Cost Pressures

Description: This initiative provides funding for legal aid services to meet demand-driven cost pressures. This funding ensures eligible court participants continue to receive legal advice and representation, supporting equitable access to justice.

Appropriation Changes

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Balance Impact*	-	30.280	-	-	-
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	30.280	-	-	-

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

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Non-Departmental Output Expenses:					
Legal Aid	-	30.280	-	-	-
Total Operating	-	30.280	-	-	-

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Ministry of Justice
Administrator:

Title: Rotorua Courthouses - Infrastructure for Growth

Description: This initiative provides funding to construct two new courthouses, one for the Rotorua High Court and District Court, and one for the Rotorua Māori Land Court. The new courthouses will be fit for purpose buildings designed to accommodate current and future demand for justice services in the Rotorua district.

Tagged Contingency

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Operating Contingency	-	-	0.233	1.399	4.895
Capital Contingency	-	4.662	23.312	69.936	2.090
Total	-	4.662	23.545	71.335	6.985

	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
Operating Contingency	8.167	9.255	9.289	9.324	9.360
Capital Contingency	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8.167	9.255	9.289	9.324	9.360

	2035/36 & Outyears
Operating Contingency	9.397
Capital Contingency	-
Total	9.397

Additional Recommendations

- 2 **agreed** to progress the Rotorua District Court and High Court, and Rotorua Māori Land Court courthouse rebuilds as traditional design and build projects;
- 3 **noted** that the Ministry of Justice will supplement the new funding provided in the tagged contingency above with a total of up to [38] in capital funding from its balance sheet, and an annual average of up to [38] from its operating baseline to enable the building and operation of the new Rotorua courthouses in paragraph 2 above;
- 4 **authorised in principle** the Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Courts jointly to draw down the tagged operating and capital contingencies above, subject to their satisfaction with an Approval to Deliver Business Case;
- 5 **agreed** that the expiry date for the above tagged contingencies be 31 March 2027;
- 6 **directed** the Ministry of Justice to continue developing options for the replacement of the Waitākere District Court building;

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Justice

Title: Term of Parliament Referendum

Description: This initiative returns funding provided for the Term of Parliament referendum, which is no longer progressing in the current parliamentary term.

Appropriation Changes

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Balance Impact*	(8.382)	(16.618)	-	-	-
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	(8.382)	(16.618)	-	-	-

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

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Public Provision of Referendum-Related Information (funded by revenue Crown)	(1.933)	(4.294)	-	-	-
Non-Departmental Output Expenses:					
General Election and Electoral Services (MYA)	(6.449)	(12.324)	-	-	-
Total Operating	(8.382)	(16.618)	-	-	-

Additional Recommendations

- 7 **agreed** not to progress the Term of Parliament referendum in the current parliamentary term;
- 8 **agreed** that the Multi-Year Appropriation '*General Election and Electoral Services*' be reduced by \$18.773 million;
- 9 **noted** that the amounts shown in the Appropriation Changes table for the Multi-Year Appropriation '*General Election and Electoral Services*' reflect the change to the indicative annual spending profile;

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Justice

Title: Resource Management Reform - Planning Tribunal Justice-Related Costs

Description: This initiative seeks funding to establish a specialist body under the Government's resource management reforms. As a division of the Environment Court, the Tribunal will provide timely, accessible, independent and cost-effective resolution of planning disputes. This initiative will fund the capital required to establish the tribunal and Legal Aid expenditure.

Appropriation Changes

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Balance Impact*	-	0.363	1.090	1.090	1.090
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	5.411	8.005	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	5.774	9.095	1.090	1.090

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

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Administration of Legal Services (funded by revenue Crown)	-	0.030	0.090	0.090	0.090
Capital Injections:					
Ministry of Justice - Capital Injection	-	5.411	8.005	-	-
Non-Departmental Output Expenses:					
Legal Aid	-	0.333	1.000	1.000	1.000
Total Operating	-	0.363	1.090	1.090	1.090
Total Capital	-	5.411	8.005	-	-

Additional Recommendation

10 **noted** that this initiative relates to Initiative 17632 in Vote Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport and Initiative 17635 in Vote Courts;

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Ministry of Justice
Administrator:

Title: Firearms Reform – Tagged Contingency for ICT Modernisation

Description: This initiative provides funding into a tagged operating contingency to enable the modernisation of the ICT systems underpinning firearms licencing, case management, and registration to improve public safety and enhance organisational efficiency.

Tagged Contingency

	Sm - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Contingency	[38]				
Total					

Additional Recommendations

- 11 **noted** that this initiative increases the funding held in a tagged contingency associated with Vote Police (Initiative 17627), and that Initiative 17627 includes the conditions for draw down of the above tagged contingency;
- 12 **noted** that the expiry date for the above tagged contingency is 31 March 2027;

Vote: Justice

Appropriation Ministry of Justice

Administrator:

Title: Firearms – Implementing the New Arms Act and Establishing Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand

Description: This initiative delivers a reformed firearms system that will improve public safety and trust and provide efficient, effective, and responsive regulatory services. It enables the Firearms Safety Authority to transform into a new independent entity, Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand.

Tagged Contingency

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Contingency	-	10.804	20.417	9.962	3.720
Total	-	10.804	20.417	9.962	3.720

Additional Recommendations

- 13 **noted** that on 22 September 2025, the Cabinet Business Committee agreed to proposals to rewrite the Arms Act 1983 [CBC-25-MIN-0043];
- 14 **authorised** the Minister of Finance, Associate Minister of Justice (Hon Nicole McKee), and the Minister of Police jointly to draw down the tagged operating contingency above, subject to their satisfaction with the proposed allocation of funds;
- 15 **agreed** that the expiry date for the above tagged contingency be 31 March 2027;
- 16 **agreed** to an in-principle expense transfer from 2025/26 to 2026/27 in the Vote Police *‘Arms Safety and Control’* appropriation of up to \$8 million;
- 17 **authorised** the Minister of Finance, Associate Minister of Justice (Hon Nicole McKee), and the Minister of Police jointly to agree the final amount to be transferred to 2026/27, following completion of the 2025/26 audited financial statements of New Zealand Police, with no impact on the operating balance and/or net core Crown debt across the forecast period;
- 18 **agreed** to amend the District Court Act 2016 to increase the maximum number of judges by one;
- 19 **invited** the Minister of Justice to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to give effect to the decision above, when a suitable legislative vehicle becomes available.