

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

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 Tertiary Education (Technical Initiatives)

On 7 May 2026, Cabinet:

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Education

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

Summary of technical 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
17426	Deferral of National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards - Transfer of Funding	(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-
17389	First-Year Fees Free - Completing the Initiative	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating		(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-

Diana Hawker
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Vote: Tertiary Education

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Education

Title: Deferral of National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards - Transfer of Funding

Description: This initiative provides for a fiscally neutral expense transfer from 2025/26 to 2026/27 for funding currently appropriated for the 2026 round of the National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards (the Awards). There is currently no administrator for the Awards and no clear successor to run the process following Budget 2025 decisions to reprioritise funding for Ako Aotearoa, who acted as the administrator of the Awards. [33]

Appropriation Changes

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Operating Balance Impact*	(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-
Net Core Crown Debt Impact Only	-	-	-	-	-
No Impact	-	-	-	-	-
Total	(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-

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

	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & Outyears
Benefits or Related Expenses:					
Tertiary Scholarships and Awards	(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-
Total Operating	(0.200)	0.200	-	-	-

Vote: Tertiary Education

Appropriation Administrator: Ministry of Education

Title: First-Year Fees Free - Completing the Initiative

Description: This initiative reprioritises underspends from Workforce Development Councils to provide funding to complete delivery of the first-year Fees Free programme, which was replaced with a final-year Fees Free scheme as part of Budget 2024. Final submissions from tertiary education providers to claim for first-year Fees-Free payments were due to the Tertiary Education Commission on 30 April 2026.

Appropriation Changes

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

* 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:					
Workforce Development Councils	(2.000)	-	-	-	-
Non-Departmental Other Expenses:					
Fees-free Payments	2.000	-	-	-	-
Total Operating	-	-	-	-	-