



Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister

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Wellbeing Budget tackles New Zealand's long-term challenges

New Zealand's long term challenges of mental health, child poverty, children in State care, family violence and homelessness are being taken seriously in the Government's Wellbeing Budget.

The Wellbeing Budget sees the Government balancing record levels of investment to resolve key long-term challenges while maintaining fiscal responsibility; delivering a sustainable surplus and growth averaging 2.6 per cent over four years, ahead of comparable economies.

"We have so often heard New Zealanders calling for early intervention and investment in challenging issues to save both money and lives in the long run. That is exactly what this Budget delivers," Jacinda Ardern says.

"I'm proud we're getting on with the job of fixing really difficult issues like mental health, poverty and family violence because they affect so many, and everyone is better off when our collective wellbeing is improved.

"As a country we just haven't seen the kind of investment in mental health that reflects how serious an issue it is – all of us know someone suffering from depression or other mental illness. Today's investment of over a billion dollars into mental health will transform the way kiwis access mental health services, but also try and prevent people needing services in the first place.

"For me, the issue of mental health is deeply personal. Almost all of us have lost friends or family members. Ensuring that New Zealanders can now just show up to their GP or health centre and get expert mental health support is a critical first step.

"This year's Budget also represents systemic change as we work to break the cycle of poverty for kids.

"The indexation of benefits will stop children in poverty falling further and further behind. The 1,000 extra Housing First placements will see more children sleeping in warm and dry homes instead of bunking down in cars. And an end to school donations for decile 17 schools means children will no longer miss out of extra activities just because their parents can't afford the voluntary donations.

"Every year about one million New Zealanders are also affected by family and sexual violence, including almost 300,000 children. Like so many New Zealanders I'm ashamed of those numbers. Our record investment in family and domestic violence prevention and services will start to eradicate this national stain.

"When our children do better, we all do better. Breaking the cycle of violence saves us costs down the line, but more importantly it makes us a better country and it makes children's lives richer and more fulfilling.

“The Coalition Government’s game-changing wellbeing investments are not possible without a strong economy. We continue to run a strong surplus, hit the lowest levels of Government debt in eight years, and record levels of growth that are the envy of comparable economies.

“Today’s Budget shows you can be both economically responsible and kind. We are turning the corner on issues others have written off as too hard for too long – while keeping the books in order.”

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