

The Treasury

Budget 2024 Information Release

September 2024

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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
- [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
- [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

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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15 February 2024

Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings

Dear Minister

Thank you for your engagement to-date on Budget 2024. As outlined in the invitation letter I sent you in December, Budget 2024 is taking place within a tight fiscal environment, and will be the next step across a series of Budgets to embed principles of fiscal sustainability and a focus on value for money. There is a high bar for initiatives and cost pressures invited for submission into the Budget 2024 process.

In your letter to me on 12 February 2024, you requested a late invite for an initiative relating to operational delivery costs to support timely access to COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics, and ongoing cost-effective management of COVID-19, and preparedness for future outbreaks and pandemics. I agree that this initiative can be invited for consideration into the Budget 2024 process, subject to your prioritisation against other invited new initiatives in Vote Health.

I have also noted your comments on rapid antigen testing and wastewater testing. These components of this initiative, along with the other COVID-19 response costs, will be assessed as part of the Budget process. I appreciate that you have also asked officials to review baselines to identify trade-offs and scaling options, as per my expectations, and I look forward to discussing these with you.

I would also like to clarify that my invite for the Waikato Medical School Project is for development of the business case only, and I will not be considering the capital needs of the project until the business case process has been completed and approved by Cabinet.

Please be aware that although I am confirming you may submit this COVID-19 initiative for consideration, this does not guarantee that it will receive funding or that it will be included in the final Budget package.

Please ensure that the initiative is submitted in line with the final deadline for all initiative submissions, being 12pm February 16 2024.

Thank you for your ongoing work and support in progressing Budget 2024.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Willis'.

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance

Cc Professor Diana Sarfati, Ministry of Health