The Treasury

Budget 2026 Information Release

September 2026

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- 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).

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TE TAI ŌHANGA
THE TREASURY

Treasury Report: Late Budget 2026 Invitation

Date:	13 March 2026	**Report No:**	T2026/510
		File Number:	BM-2-4-2026-M134891

Action sought

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Bishop **Associate Minister of Finance**	**Indicate** your decision on the initiative in Annex 1 **Sign** the attached letter in Annex 2	13 March 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st Contact
Thulacksha Thayarooban	Analyst, Budget	[39] N/A (mob)	✓
Stephen Bond	Manager, Budget	N/A (mob)	

Minister's Office actions (if required)

Return the signed report to Treasury.

Note any feedback on the quality of the report	

Enclosure: Yes

Treasury Report: Late Budget 2026 Invitation

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks your decisions on a late Budget 2026 initiative request from the Minister for Economic Growth. Your delegation to approve initiatives in Hon Willis's portfolios was provided for in a letter dated 25 January 2024 from the Minister of Finance.

2. The Minister for Economic Growth is requesting an invitation to progress changes to the operating funding model for the Aspire NZ Seed Fund. We recommend that you agree to invite this initiative into Budget 2026. Our advice is attached at **Annex 1.**

3. If you choose to invite this initiative, we recommend you send a response letter to the Minister for Economic Growth to inform her of your decision. A draft letter is attached in **Annex 2.**

Recommended actions

We recommend that you:

a **indicate** your decision on the Budget 2026 initiative request from the Economic Growth portfolio in Annex 1;

b if you agree to invite the initiative in Annex 1, **sign** the letter informing the Minister for Economic Growth in Annex 2.

Stephen Bond
Manager

Hon Chris Bishop
Associate Minister of Finance

_____/_____/_______

Annex 1: Initiative requiring a decision

Vote Business, Science and Innovation – Startup Support Package (Aspire Operating Funding Model)

Vote	Business, Science and Innovation (Economic Growth)
Initiative ID	N/A
Initiative Title	N/A - New Request (Startup Support Package)
Contact details	Brock Stobbs – Analyst John Marney – Manager [39]
Issue / advice sought	The Minister for Economic Growth is requesting an invitation to progress changes to the operating funding model for the Aspire NZ Seed Fund. Given this is a significant policy change and has fiscal implications, we advised this initiative should be considered through Budget as a significant initiative. If you agree, we have attached a letter for your signature, inviting this initiative to be submitted into Budget.

Treasury advice

The Aspire NZ Seed Fund (Aspire) is a fund administered by New Zealand Growth Capital Partners, a Crown entity company focused on developing a self-sustaining early-stage investment ecosystem. Aspire invests directly into early-stage technology start-ups at the proof of concept, seed and early expansion investment stages (referred to as the pre-Series A market).

Following a review of Aspire in 2025, MBIE determined that current settings are preventing it from addressing some capital gaps that have emerged in the pre-Series A market. NZGCP is required to use realisations from its investment to fund Aspire's operating costs and future investments – a self-funding evergreen model. This incentivises NZGCP to take a more conservative approach to Aspire investments.

To remove the conflicting incentives and allow NZGCP to focus on Aspire's policy objectives of developing the pre-Series A market, the Minister for Economic Growth is seeking to:

- Provide baseline funding to NZGCP for its operating costs ($6.0m p.a.). NZGCP would still be required to use realisations to fund future investments.
- Require NZGCP, via its annual Letter of Expectations, to provide the Crown with an annual dividend payment (of irregular amounts) to offset the cost. This would potentially make the initiative fiscally neutral in the long-term.

We see the benefits of changing the operating funding model. This is consistent with other international examples, including Singapore and Denmark which uses a mix of realisations and central funding to cover operating costs. The key consideration in this approach is that it transfers the funding risk to the Crown. In the event that investments do not generate enough realisations over the medium term, there would be a net fiscal cost. If this change is successful in encouraging NZGCP to take a less conservative investment approach (the policy objective), it could also increase the risk of it seeking capital injections in future to enable it to continue investing. This is because NZGCP may accept more risk around investment returns, so that dividend payments to the Crown could exhaust its reserves if returns are disappointing.

The Minister for Economic Growth has indicated that this initiative is intended to form part of a startup support package, which could involve a request for further Budget invitations.

Treasury recommendation

We recommend you:

- **Agree** to invite this initiative into Budget 2026 – Yes/No

Option	ID	Operating ($m)						Total Capital ($m)
		25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	Total	
Current status in package	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Option A	N/A		6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	24.0	-

Annex 2: Letter to the Minister for Economic Growth

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister for Economic Growth
Parliament Buildings

Dear Nicola

Thank you for your letter received on 9 February 2026 requesting an invitation into Budget 2026 to enable a change in the operating funding model for the Aspire NZ Seed Fund (Aspire).

You have requested to establish an annual appropriation with $6 million per annum for the purpose of funding the operating costs of New Zealand Growth Capital Partner (NZGCP) associated with administering Aspire. This initiative is intended to be fiscally neutral by offsetting the fiscal impact of new baseline funding with an annual dividend from NZGCP's cash reserves.

I have decided to invite you to submit the change in operating funding model initiative into Budget 2026. Please note the bar for new spending through Budget 2026 is high, and an invitation is not a guarantee of funding.

I ask that your officials work with the Treasury to submit this initiative into the Treasury's CFISnet system by 1pm, Friday 20 March, including information on implementing the dividend payment process and how to ensure this initiative remains fiscally neutral.

Thank you for your continued engagement with the Budget 2026 process and ensuring spending represents value for money.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Chris Bishop
Associate Minister of Finance

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand | c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz