

Inquiry into performance reporting and public accountability



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

October 2025

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Inquiry into performance reporting and public accountability. We welcome changes that will increase the effectiveness of performance reporting and enhance public accountability. We support changes to reporting that consider both direct and indirect financial and societal outcomes over the long-term.

Our main points are:

Item One

Cross-agency consideration of the outcomes of public spending/savings is needed to assess its effectiveness.

Item Two

Public spending should be considered over the long-term, not just the short term, with a focus placed on investments which provide long-term public benefit

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

We raise the following points and recommendations for consideration:

Item One: Cross-agency consideration of the outcomes of public spending/savings is needed

Ministries currently report spending or savings related to their specific department or a specific issue, with minimal consideration for the flow on effects to other departments or spending in other areas. This can mean that estimated cost savings or outlays reported are not reflective of the actual consolidated cost savings/outlay to the Government as a whole. Examples include issues like the recent changes to the way that increases to the benefit are calculated with indexation now done by inflation rather than wages. These changes have been reported as saving the Government \$669.5 million over a 5-year period, however these 'savings' will result in benefit recipients having comparatively less income and may impact their ability to afford essentials (MSD, 2024). Reporting on this has marketed it as saving the Government money with minimal consideration for potential flow on effects to other areas such as ongoing healthcare costs if people cannot afford medical expenses or an increase in requirement for additional financial supports if benefit recipients are no longer able to afford housing or food costs and require supplementary hardship grants. There is a need for consideration of the broader implications of policy changes beyond immediate costings and savings, and beyond departmental boundaries, and modelling of this to assess what the impact will be over the long term.

Recommendation One: NZCCSS recommends that reporting should consider associated outcomes and costs that may have changed as a result of the public spend/savings

Item Two: Public spending should invest in the future, not just the short term

Public spending is often based upon short-term goals with little consideration of the long-term implications as a result of Governments often not considering a future beyond the four-year forecast period or their own parliamentary term. Many initiatives which better the wellbeing of people for example investment in healthcare have larger initial financial outlay but will likely save money in the longer term. The proposal to consider long-term implications of public spending should allow for consideration of long-term outcomes both in terms of direct future savings as a result of the more immediate spending and possible long-term benefits that are not so monetarily clear such as improvements in health. This is particularly pertinent at the moment when vast cuts in public spending have been made to reduce public debt. Although these cuts may be deemed by some to be necessary due to the level of public debt (Budget 2025, 2025) they are likely to result in great spending being needed at a later date. This delay in public spending may, in some instances, result in additional costs, for example in funding for healthcare where delays in costs for preventative healthcare may result in additional costs as a result of disease progression (Demirtas & Flahault, 2025).

Recommendation Two: NZCCSS recommends that reporting considers both long-term financial and society impacts of public spending

Ngā Tohutoro | References

Budget 2025 (2025). Fiscal Strategy Report 2025: *Fiscal Strategy*.

<https://budget.govt.nz/budget/2025/fiscal-strategy-report/fiscal-strategy.htm>

Demirtas, E. D., & Flahault, A. (2025). A Scoping Review on the Economic Impacts of Healthy Ageing Promotion and Disease Prevention in OECD Member Countries. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 22(8), 1161. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph22081161>

Ministry of Social Development (MSD). (January 2024). *Regulatory Impact Statement: Article 1. Supplementary Analysis Report: Indexing Main Benefits to Inflation*.

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 100 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - www.nzccss.org.nz.

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