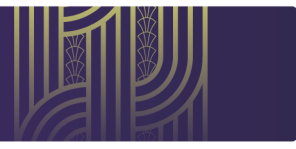




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OIA1188



1 July 2026

Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 28 May 2026, to the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha (the Ministry), requesting information relating to Budget 2026.

I have answered each of your questions below.

1. The agency's Budget 2026 savings options paper(s) or initiative bids submitted to the Treasury or the Minister between 1 September 2025 and 19 May 2026.

Items to the Minister for Disability Issues

The Ministry has provided three briefings to the Minister relating to Budget 26 savings initiatives.

The first two papers, REP/WHK/25/12/082 - Budget Initiatives for Budget 2026 (dated 4 December 2025) and REP/WHK/26/4/018 - Budget 2026 (dated 22 April 2026), are attached in Appendix 1.

Please note:

- the Main Estimates for Vote Disabled People and the Supplementary Estimates for Vote Disabled People originally enclosed in REP/WHK/26/4/018 are refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as this material is publicly available here: [Disabled People - Estimates by Vote - Budget 2026 - 28 May 2026](#)
- names and contact details for staff members have been considered outside of the scope of your request and redacted accordingly.



The third paper, REP/WHK/26/5/22 (dated 12 May 2026), is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) and 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA. This is in order to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials and maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

Items to Treasury

The Ministry uploaded information relating to the savings initiative for Vote Disabled People into the Crown's Financial and Information System. There were three initiatives put forward:

- No implementation of Savings Target (the Ministry's preferred option)
- Partial implementation of Savings Target
- Full implementation of Savings Target (the bilaterlised option)

Full implementation of Savings Target was the bilateralised option for Budget 2026. Treasury has proactively released a summary of Vote Disabled People's savings initiative included in Budget 2026, and the material is publicly available here: [Summary of Initiatives in Budget 2026 | The Treasury New Zealand](#) (page 28 of the Summary of Initiatives document provides information about Vote Disabled People).

We have provided a summary of the two unselected savings initiative proposals in Appendix 2, in accordance with section 16(e) of the OIA.

2. Any document showing any FTE reduction expected at the agency as a result of Budget 2026, broken down by business group, function, or location to the extent that breakdown exists.

One document has been identified within the scope of your request and is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) and 9(2)(f)(iv) of the OIA.

Please note the Ministry is still working how best to optimise its operating model and holds no documentation about any expected FTE reductions broken down by business group, function or location.

3. Any document held by the agency that defines or identifies which of its roles are considered 'frontline' and which are not, for the purpose of the Budget 2026 exercise.

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain this information does not exist.

4. Any business case, modelling, or analysis dated between 1 September 2025 and present concerning the use of AI, automation, or digital tools to replace, reduce, or substitute roles within the agency.

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain this information does not exist.

The Ministry has not identified any FTE reductions as a result of its use of AI.

AI is being used to support staff, not replace them. The Ministry's focus is on reducing time spent on repeatable and resource-intensive tasks so staff can focus on higher-value work, including system leadership, accessibility, alternate format standards, policy advice, monitoring and support to other agencies.

This represents a shift in how work is supported and prioritised, not a reduction in staffing levels.

5. Any change proposal, indicative structure document, or consultation document issued to staff or unions on or before the date of this request relating to the Budget 2026 savings exercise.

This part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the document alleged to contain this information does not exist.

6. Correspondence between the Chief Executive (or equivalent) and the Minister, the Treasury, or the Public Service Commissioner between 1 January 2026 and present concerning the savings exercise or workforce reductions.

The Ministry's Chief Executive received a letter regarding Public Service transformation from the Public Service Commissioner, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Secretary to the Treasury on 19 May 2026.

The Public Service Commission will be proactively releasing this letter on its website, therefore a copy is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information will soon be publicly available.

Please note, as part of its commitment towards increasing transparency, the Ministry intends to make the information contained in this OIA response, and

any attached documents, available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on our website. Your personal details will be deleted, and no information that would identify you as the requestor will be released.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, or if you are seeking any further information, please contact OIA_requests@whaikaha.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EMW', with several horizontal lines extending from the right side of the signature.

Emma Williams
Manager, Ministerial and Executive Services



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Visual description: A purple Whaikaha logo with a QR scan for the NZSL name.

Briefing

Date:	4 December 2025
For:	Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Disability
File reference:	REP/WHK/25/12/082
Security level:	Budget Sensitive

Budget Initiatives for Budget 2026

Purpose

For your approval is a letter to the Minister of Finance for Budget Initiatives.

Executive summary

For Budget 2026, Budget Ministers have agreed to a baseline reduction of 2 per cent at Budget 2026.

The process requires that:

- information relating to the budget initiative for Vote Disabled People is loaded into CFISnet by 19 December 2025.
- as appropriation Minister for all the appropriations in the Vote, you are required to write to the Minister of Finance by 19 December 2025 providing a brief summary of the savings submissions that the changes in this submission are complete and within the scope of your delegated authority.
- Treasury have provided a template for this letter, which is attached to this letter.

The invitation letter advised target savings of \$0.4m based on a 2% reduction in the Departmental appropriation. Upon enquiry, Treasury officials have confirmed that this savings target was rounded up, and the precise savings target is \$0.374m. This confirmation is provided in the attached Appendix One for your record.

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- a) sign the attached letter to the Minister of Finance

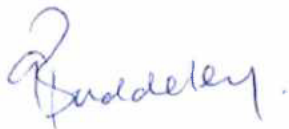
Agree | Disagree



Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Date 22/12/2025



Ginny Baddeley

DCE Strategy & Enablement

Date 3 December 2025

Actions for private secretaries:

Appendix one: Correspondence between Treasury and the Ministry

From: Out of scope <[redacted]@treasury.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 2 December 2025 4:41 pm
To: Out of scope <[redacted]@whaikaha.govt.nz>; Out of scope <[redacted]@whaikaha.govt.nz>; Out of scope <[redacted]@whaikaha.govt.nz>
Cc: Out of scope <[redacted]@treasury.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: WHK/TSY regular 7/11/25

Kia ora koutou,

Good to see you all here at TSY today. Looking forward to receiving some context on the 'Establishing the Ministry' funding, which Out of scope, and I can use to investigate possible vehicles to get the funding rephased.

Following up on two smaller points that arose:

- We checked with our Budget team on the exact quantum of the 2% target. **Confirming that \$0.374m is Whaikaha's exact target** (the letter rounded up to \$0.4 stylistically).
- We checked [CO 23 \(9\)](#) to see if Whaikaha would need to get Ministerial or Cabinet approval for the asset investment associated. Thankfully, **looks like only your CE is required to approve the investment in this case**. Worth checking the circular if you haven't already though, for guidance on investments.

Trust this assists.

Ngā mihi,

Out of scope

Out of scope | Te Tai Ōhanga **The Treasury**

Social Sector, Communities & Learning

Public Sector Performance, System & Sector Performance

īmēra email Out of scope

treasury.govt.nz | [LinkedIn](#) | [Youtube](#)

Hon Louise Upston

BUDGET SENSITIVE



Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for Social Development and Employment
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Deputy Leader of the House

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance
Parliament Buildings

Dear Hon Nicola Willis

I am confirming that I, the Minister for Disability Issues have submitted the initiatives for Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha, which covers all proposals for the Disability Issues Portfolio.

Baseline Reduction

ID	Initiative Title	Total Operating (\$millions)
17135	Optimising the Ministry	0.374
Total Baseline Reduction submitted		0.374
Baseline Reduction Target identified in invitation letter		0.400

The reason for the difference between the Total Baseline Reduction submitted and the Baseline Reduction Target identified in the invitation letter that Treasury office also has confirmed our savings target is \$0.374M due to rounding.

Sincerely

Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues



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NZSL name

Visual description: A purple Whaikaha logo with a QR scan for the NZSL name.

Briefing

Date:	22 April 2026
For:	Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Disability Issues
File reference:	REP/WHK/26/4/018
Security level:	In confidence

Budget 2026

Executive summary

All appropriations, including changes agreed through the Budget process, must be authorised by Parliament through an Appropriation Act.

The Estimates and Supplementary Estimates have been prepared in accordance with Treasury guidance and reflect all Cabinet and bilateral decisions taken through the Budget 2026 process. This is a technical and confirmatory step and does not introduce new policy decisions or funding requests.

Due to uncertainty arising from recent developments in the Middle East, Budget 2026 timeframes have been revised. Final Estimates and Supplementary Estimates must align with Cabinet decisions, or with bilateral decisions where documentation is submitted before 28 April.

Where documentation is submitted before 28 April, Treasury has advised minor changes may be made to either the Estimates or Supplementary Estimates before it is sent to MoF on 29 April.

Subject to your sign-off, and the caveat on minor amendments, these documents will be finalised for inclusion in the Budget 2026 documentation presented to Parliament.


As the Minister, for Vote Disabled People, you are required to confirm:


- The Estimates and Supplementary Estimates are complete and accurately reflect agreed decisions.
- All changes have been made within the approved Budget processes and timeframes.
- The information complies with Treasury instructions and Budget moratorium requirements.
- The required Ministerial certifications accompany this submission.


Recommendations


It is recommended that you:


- a) **Note** the Main Estimates for Vote Disabled People, prepared for Budget 2026  **Noted**

- b) **Note** the Supplementary Estimates for Vote Disabled People, prepared for Budget 2026  **Noted**

- c) **Note** the Chief Executive certification of the Main Estimates, confirming factual and technical accuracy and reconciliation with approved Budget decisions.  **Noted**

- d) **Note** the Chief Executive certification of the Supplementary Estimates, confirming factual and technical accuracy and reconciliation with approved Budget decisions.  **Noted**

- e) **Sign** the attached letter to the Minister of Finance providing assurance that the Main Estimates are accurate, complete, and ready for publication, as required under the Treasury Circular.  **Agree | Disagree**

- f) **Sign** the attached letter to the Minister of Finance providing assurance that the Supplementary Estimates are accurate, complete, and ready for publication, as required under the Treasury Circular.  **Agree | Disagree**

- g) **Agree** that the signed letters for the Main Estimates and Supplementary Estimates in addition to the Main Estimates and Supplementary Estimates chapters be forwarded to the Minister of Finance **by 1:00 pm on 29 April**, to meet Budget 2026 deadlines set by Treasury.

Agree | Disagree



Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Date 20260427



Paula Tesoriero MNZM

Chief Executive

Date 22 April 2026



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Visual description: A purple Whaikaha logo with a QR scan for the NZSL name.

Level 4, 56 The Terrace
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

22 April 2026

Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

2026/27 Estimates Documents for Vote: Disabled People

Action Required

Attached, for your approval are:

- the documentation for the 2026/27 Estimates and Supporting Information for Vote Disabled People, and
- a draft letter to the Minister of Finance.

Background

The Budget 2026 process requires that:

- the Estimates documentation for Vote Disabled People is completed by 29 April 2026, and
- as the appropriation Minister for all of the appropriations in the Vote, you confirm to the Minister of Finance that this material is correct and in a form suitable for publication.

The Estimates and Supporting Information Documents

I confirm that the information provided for your approval:

- is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the government, and has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989

- is consistent with the proposed appropriations to be set out in the Appropriation (2026/27 Estimates) Bill, as entered by the Ministry of Disabled People into the Treasury's CFISnet system
- is consistent with existing appropriations, financial authorities, and Cabinet decisions up to 20 April 2026
- has been prepared in the required format, and in accordance with the guidance that has been issued by the Treasury
- has been appropriately reviewed by the Ministry of Disabled People's senior management team – with a particular focus on areas where new strategic information, such as statements about what an appropriation is intended to achieve, is now required, and
- has been through an appropriate quality assurance process and is free of material errors and omissions.

The Budget process requires that you review the Estimates documentation, and then confirm to the Minister of Finance that it is fit for publication.”

Recommendation

I recommend that you sign the attached letter to the Minister of Finance

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Tesoriero', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paula Tesoriero MNZM

Secretary for Disabled People and Chief Executive



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NZSL name



Visual description: A purple Whaikaha logo with a QR scan for the NZSL name.

Level 4, 56 The Terrace
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

22 April 2026

Hon Louise Upston
Minister for Disability Issues
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

2025/26 Supplementary Estimates Documents for Vote: Disabled People

Action Required

Attached, for your approval are:

- the documentation for the 2025/26 Supplementary Estimates and Supporting Information for Vote Disabled People, and
- a draft letter to the Minister of Finance.

Background

The Budget 2026 process requires that:

- the Supplementary Estimates documentation for Vote Disabled People is completed by 29 April 2026 and as the appropriation Minister for all of the appropriations in the Vote, you confirm to the Minister of Finance that this material is correct and in a form suitable for publication.

The Supplementary Estimates and Supporting Information Documents

I confirm that the information provided for your approval:

- is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government, and has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989
- is consistent with the proposed appropriations to be set out in the Appropriation (2025/26 Supplementary Estimates) Bill, as entered by the Ministry of Disabled People into the Treasury's CFISnet system



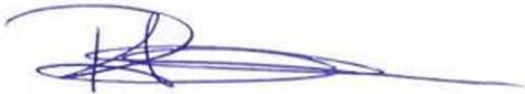
- is consistent with existing appropriations, financial authorities, and Cabinet decisions up to 20 April 2026
- has been prepared in the required format, and in accordance with the guidance that has been issued by the Treasury
- has been appropriately reviewed by the Ministry of Disabled People's senior management team – with a particular focus on areas where new strategic information, such as statements about what an appropriation is intended to achieve, is now required, and
- has been through an appropriate quality assurance process and is free of material errors and omissions.

The Budget process requires that you review the Estimates documentation, and then confirm to the Minister of Finance that it is fit for publication.

Recommendation

I recommend that you sign the attached letter to the Minister of Finance

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'P' followed by a series of horizontal strokes that trail off to the right.

Paula Tesoriero MNZM

Secretary for Disabled People and Chief Executive

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for Social Development and Employment
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Deputy Leader of the House



April 2026

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

2026/27 Estimates: Ministerial Sign-off for Vote Disabled People

I advise that the Estimates of Appropriations 2026/27 and Supporting Information documents for Vote Disabled People, for which the Ministry of Disabled People is the administering department, have been completed – and that it is accurate and suitable for publication. I confirm that the information provided:

is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the government, and has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989

- is consistent with the proposed appropriations to be set out in the Appropriation (2026/27 Estimates) Bill, existing appropriations and financial authorities, and with Cabinet decisions up to 20 April 2026.
- is provided in the required format, and has been prepared in accordance with the guidance that has been issued by the Treasury, and
- has been through an appropriate quality assurance process and is free of material errors and omissions.

In signing this statement, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information for Vote Disabled People administered by the Ministry of Disabled People included in the Estimates of Appropriations 2026/27 and Supporting Information.

Sincerely

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector
Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for Social Development and Employment
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Deputy Leader of the House



April 2026

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

2025/26 Supplementary Estimates: Ministerial Sign-off for Vote Disabled People

I advise that the Supplementary Estimates of Appropriations 2025/26 and Supporting Information documents for Vote Disabled People, for which the Ministry of Disabled People is the administering department, have been completed – and that it is accurate and suitable for publication. I confirm that the information provided:

- is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the government, and has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance Act 1989
- is consistent with the proposed appropriations to be set out in the Appropriation (2025/26 Supplementary Estimates) Bill, existing appropriations and financial authorities, and with Cabinet decisions up to 20 April 2026.
- is provided in the required format, and has been prepared in accordance with the guidance that has been issued by the Treasury, and
- has been through an appropriate quality assurance process and is free of material errors and omissions.

In signing this statement, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information for Vote Disabled People administered by the Ministry of

Disabled People included in the Supplementary Estimates of Appropriations 2025/26 and Supporting Information.

Sincerely

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Appendix 2

Summary of initiative: Optimising the Ministry - No implementation of Savings Target

Initiative Summary

Optimising the Ministry

This initiative optimises the workforce through leveraging the benefits from operational efficiency and realising the investment in AI. Further work is planned in early 2026 to review our operating model and organisational design, reassessing roles through attrition, shifting investment into priority area.

Type of initiative

Service or policy savings

Total Operating over the forecast period

\$0.000 million

Total Capital over the forecast period

\$0.000 million

Operating Funding Summary

over the forecast (\$m)

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-

Capital Funding Summary

over the forecast (\$m)

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	-	-	-	-	-	
Net Funding	-	-	-	-	-	
	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	Total

Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary of initiative: Optimising the Ministry - Partial implementation of Savings Target

Initiative Summary

Optimising the Ministry

This initiative optimises the workforce through leveraging the benefits from operational efficiency and realising the investment in AI. Further work is planned in early 2026 to review our operating model and organisational design, reassessing roles through attrition, shifting investment into priority area.

Type of initiative

Service or policy savings

Total Operating over the forecast period

\$(0.748) million

Total Capital over the forecast period

\$0.000 million

Operating Funding Summary

over the forecast (\$m)

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 & OutYears	Total
Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	-	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.748
Net Funding	-	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.748)

Capital Funding Summary

over the forecast (\$m)

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	
Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	-	-	-	-	-	
Net Funding	-	-	-	-	-	
	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	Total
Total Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-

Net Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-
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