

Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government

Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004

Date of issue: **17 September 2026**

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Title: Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004

Author: Public Service Commission - Te Kawa Mataaho

Hon Paul Goldsmith, Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government, and Hon Nicola Willis, Minister of Finance, are releasing this Cabinet Paper and Minute.

Explanatory Note

Included in this release are the following documents:

- Cabinet Paper – Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004
- Minute of Decision – ECO-26-MIN-0151
- Minute of Decision – CAB-26-MIN-0266
- Appendix A – Direction on Centralising Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making



Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004

Portfolios **Finance / Public Service and Digitising Government**

On 5 August 2026, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee (ECO):

- 1 **noted** that:
 - 1.1 in August 2025, ECO agreed to centralise digital investment and procurement decision making across Public Service agencies and Crown entities [ECO-25-MIN-0132];
 - 1.2 in March 2026, the Cabinet Business Committee noted that the Minister of Finance and the Minister for the Public Service intended to instruct officials to commence consultation on a draft Direction with Crown entities and their monitoring and invited the Ministers to report back to ECO in June 2026 on the outcome of consultation [CBC-26-MIN-0006];
- 2 **endorsed** the scope and content of the proposed Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making (the Direction), set out in Appendix A under ECO-26-SUB-0151;
- 3 **noted** that the Direction will commence in two phases – phase 1 will commence from 2 November 2026 and include:
 - 3.1 Accident Compensation Corporation;
 - 3.2 Health New Zealand;
 - 3.3 Natural Hazards Commission;
 - 3.4 Kāinga Ora;
 - 3.5 New Zealand Qualifications Authority;
 - 3.6 New Zealand Trade and Enterprise;
 - 3.7 New Zealand Transport Agency;
 - 3.8 Tertiary Education Commission;

- 4 **noted** that phase 2 will commence on 1 November 2027 and include:
- 4.1 Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand;
 - 4.2 Education New Zealand;
 - 4.3 Education Payroll Limited;
 - 4.4 Electoral Commission;
 - 4.5 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;
 - 4.6 Fire and Emergency New Zealand;
 - 4.7 Financial Markets Authority;
 - 4.8 Maritime New Zealand;
 - 4.9 Network for Learning Limited;
 - 4.10 New Zealand School Property Agency;
 - 4.11 Pharmaceutical Management Agency;
 - 4.12 Research and Education Advanced Network New Zealand Limited;
 - 4.13 Water Services Authority;
 - 4.14 WorkSafe New Zealand;
- 5 **noted** that the Minister of Finance and the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government (joint Ministers) will present the Direction to the House of Representatives by 3 September 2026 to ensure the Direction is given before the 2026 General Election;
- 6 **agreed** that the Government Chief Digital Officer, with the approval of joint Ministers, will set the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders across the digital investment lifecycle, including all funding pathways, and before the direction comes into effect, to ensure the Direction's successful implementation from day one and will evolve over time as wider system changes progress;
- 7 **invited** the joint Ministers to report back to Cabinet by November 2028 on the Direction's progress and additional phasing.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present: (see over)

Present:

Hon David Seymour
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Nicola Willis (Chair)
Hon Chris Bishop
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Paul Goldsmith
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Penny Simmonds
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon Andrew Hoggard
Hon Mark Patterson
Hon James Meager
Hon Scott Simpson
Hon Cameron Brewer
Hon Mike Butterick
Simon Court MP

Officials present from:

Office of Hon Chris Bishop
Officials Committee for ECO



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report of the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee: Period Ended 7 August 2026

On 10 August 2026, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee for the period ended 7 August 2026:

out of scope



ECO-26-MIN-0151

Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004

Portfolios: Finance / Public Service and Digitising Government

CONFIRMED

out of scope



out of scope



Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government

Office of the Minister of Finance

Cabinet Economic Policy Committee

Setting a Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making under the Crown Entities Act 2004

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks your endorsement of the scope and content for the Whole of Government Direction to Crown Entities on Centralising Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making (**the direction**). The direction (Appendix A) will be phased to ensure successful implementation within baselines.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This paper supports priorities to get the Government's books back in order, restore fiscal discipline, strengthen the efficiency and performance of the public sector and public sector delivery, lift productivity, and drive sustainable economic growth.

Background

- 3 On 25 August 2025, Cabinet agreed that digital investment and procurement decision making for Public Service agencies and Crown entities will be centralised and led by the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO), with GCDO involvement based on clear criteria. Cabinet noted that this requires the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government and the Minister of Finance (Joint Ministers) to give a section 107 direction under the Crown Entities Act 2004 (the Act) and to consult impacted Crown entities [CAB-25-MIN-0286; ECO-25-MIN-0217 refers].
- 4 On 23 March 2026, we informed Cabinet that we will instruct officials to consult 23 Crown entities who meet a set of common characteristics: significant scale/revenue; significant digital assets; high public-touch points; and significant regulatory or system risk. This includes the eight Crown entities already covered by the 2014 ICT Functional Leadership Direction.¹ Cabinet invited us to report back on findings [CAB-26-MIN-0079 refers].
- 5 Consultation with 22 Crown entities,² their monitoring agencies and relevant system leads ran from 8 April to 14 May 2026.

¹ Accident Compensation Corporation, Health New Zealand, the Natural Hazards Commission, Kāinga Ora, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, New Zealand Transport Agency and the Tertiary Education Commission.

² City Rail was removed from the list of 23 Crown entities as their assets were transferred to Auckland Transport and KiwiRail on 30 June 2026.

Consultation feedback

- 6 Most submitters noted that the Digital Government Target State (Target State) is still under development and will continue to be built out and updated over time.³ Submitters emphasise the importance of establishing a clear and well-defined Target State as the critical foundation for alignment and expect to be further engaged as the Target State is developed.
- 7 We consider that while certainty will improve over time, the digital investment context will remain subject to rapid and ongoing change as public service reform and technologies continue to evolve. There is a need to remain agile. We support a partnership and continuous improvement approach to change.
- 8 While there is support for aligning common capabilities (digital products and services most agencies and Crown entities consume), there is less support for centralising specialised capabilities. However, in some cases, we consider that what is being referred to as specialised capabilities to instead be highly customised common back-office capabilities (such as case management and customer relationship management systems).
- 9 The tendency for Crown entities and agencies to over-emphasise the specialist nature of their digital requirements and under-emphasise the high levels of commonality is a key feature of our current digital government system. There is also a high reliance on customised legacy systems. Resolving this and shifting Crown entities and agencies to common, interoperable systems and platforms is at the core of the broader public sector reform we seek to achieve.
- 10 Submitters noted the significant transition risks and costs, which may impact on service levels, timelines and budgets. They said alignment must be fit for purpose, proportionate to net benefit, and justified. It must also be funded and phased appropriately, particularly during the first years when risk is highest. Our comments on this are provided in the section on financial implications.
- 11 Submitters noted that a section 107 direction must not limit or override any statutory independence that a Crown entity has under its own governing legislation. Submitters said alignment must consider this including any statutory obligations, decision making rights, director duties and Minister expectations of individual Crown entities. Many submitters noted this requires a case-by-case approach to alignment.
- 12 We note the GCDO will use clear criteria to make determinations which may change based on the type of determination. Crown entities concerned about their ability to meet their statutory obligations and director duties in the context of a GCDO determination should first discuss this with the GCDO and may escalate the matter to their responsible Minister if a mutually acceptable resolution is not reached.

³ The GCDO is responsible for developing and maintaining a rolling 5-year Target State [ECO-25-MIN-0132 refers].

- 13 Submitters said they require clarity on roles and responsibilities across the investment lifecycle to implement the direction. This should be aligned to existing planning and reporting cycles and include the decision making process, thresholds and escalation policy. We support this and propose to do this before the direction comes into effect.
- 14 New Zealand Government Procurement (NZGP) is the Procurement System Leader under the Public Service Act 2020. NZGP noted that the direction will need to be subject to all directions, guidance, tools, templates, and any other artefacts created by or issued under the mandate of the Procurement System Leader (GOV-23-MIN-0025 refers) and the Procurement Functional Leadership Whole of Government Direction 2014.

Proposed changes to the final direction

- 15 Feedback can be addressed, to some extent, by phasing the direction, doing policy work to clarify roles and responsibilities before the direction comes into effect, and making some changes to the final direction. This will accelerate the Target State while ensuring there are appropriate checks and balances to mitigate risks and manage implementation successfully within baselines.
- 16 We propose applying the direction to all 22 Crown entities but phasing it over two years. The proposed approach is as follows:
 - a. **Phase 1: The direction will apply to the eight Crown entities under the 2014 ICT Functional Leadership Direction and come into effect on 2 November 2026.** These Crown entities have significant scale and system impact and are already familiar with aspects of the Target State. Prioritising these Crown entities will accelerate the Target State.
 - b. **Phase 2: The direction will apply to the 14 other Crown entities from 1 November 2027.** The intent is to apply the direction to all Crown entities over time. These entities all substantially meet at least two of the four criteria we considered: significant scale/revenue; significant digital assets; high public-touch points; and significant regulatory or system risk.
- 17 Implementation will be monitored and the approach for extending the direction to all other Crown entities will be considered by Joint Ministers by November 2028. All other Crown entities should consider the direction as an expression of government policy in the interim but will not be obliged to follow it unless they choose to opt in and there is capacity to provide them with support.
- 18 We seek your agreement that the GCDO, on Joint Minister approval, will set the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders across the digital investment lifecycle, including all funding pathways. This will be done before the direction comes into effect to ensure the direction is successful from day one and will need to evolve over time as wider system changes progress.

19 We have made changes to the final direction in line with this approach:⁴

- a. **The commencement date and phasing have been added:**
 - i. Phase 1 Crown entities are listed in Schedule 1. The direction will apply to them from 2 November 2026.
 - ii. Phase 2 Crown entities are listed in Schedule 2. The direction will apply to them from 1 November 2027.
- b. **A section on partnership has been added to reflect how the GCDO intends to work with Crown entities:** This demonstrates the commitment to ongoing engagement and continuous improvement.
- c. **Two new mechanisms have been added:** The GCDO may issue a standard or circular under the direction and publish them on www.digital.govt.nz, subject to Joint Minister agreement to the policy.
- d. **A requirement to act consistently with the roles and responsibilities of the direction has been added:** This does not provide the policy details as we intend to set this in a circular before the direction commences.
- e. **The limitations section has been updated to reflect current procurement settings:** This clarifies that the direction is subject to NZGP's Procurement System Leadership mandate and the Procurement Functional Leadership Whole of Government Direction 2014.

20 These changes are reflected in the final direction enclosed at Appendix A.

Implementation

Next steps	Timeframe
Joint Ministers present the direction to the House of Representatives	Tuesday 18 August 2026
The direction is referred to the Governance and Administration Committee	
The direction may be given after 15 sitting days The House of Representatives rises	Thursday 24 September 2026
Joint Ministers approve roles and responsibilities	By mid-October 2026
The direction is applied to phase 1 Crown entities	Monday 2 November 2026
The direction is applied to phase 2 Crown entities	Monday 1 November 2027
Progress is monitored and additional phasing considered by Joint Ministers	By November 2028

⁴ Minor changes have also been made. These enhance readability but do not change the policy intent.

Financial implications

- 21 Crown entities' compliance with the direction will be targeted and sequenced based on system-level investment priorities. This may result in transition costs for individual entities in some cases depending on investment requirements, dependencies and sequencing. The GCDO will need to consider this on a case-by-case basis using clear criteria which also considers system costs and the net benefit of change.
- 22 Individual entities may escalate a matter, such as transition costs, to their responsible minister if a mutually agreed outcome is not reached with the GCDO. This process will be established in the GCDO circular on roles and responsibilities, which we propose to set before the direction comes into effect.
- 23 Crown entities will need to fund the implementation of the direction (such as reporting and ongoing engagement) through baselines.

Treaty of Waitangi

- 24 A few submitters noted that Māori sovereign data interests will need to be considered if customer data is in scope of the Target State.

Human Rights

- 25 The proposals are not inconsistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Use of External Resources

- 26 1.0 FTE policy contractor was engaged for three months to deliver this work.

Consultation

- 27 The Treasury; Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport; Department of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ministry of Primary Industries; Ministry of Social Development; Te Puni Kōkiri; and Ministry of Culture and Heritage. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet was informed.

Communications

- 28 We intend to make announcements relating to the direction.

Proactive Release

- 29 This Cabinet paper will be proactively released within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet. The Cabinet paper 'A direction under the Crown Entities Act 2004 to support a whole of government approach for digital investment and procurement' which was considered on 23 March 2026, will be released at the same time.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- 1 **endorse** the scope and content of the proposed Whole of Government Direction to Centralise Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making (the direction);
- 2 **note** that the direction will commence in two phases – phase 1 will commence from 2 November 2026 and include:
 - 2.1 Accident Compensation Corporation;
 - 2.2 Health New Zealand;
 - 2.3 Natural Hazards Commission;
 - 2.4 Kāinga Ora;
 - 2.5 New Zealand Qualifications Authority;
 - 2.6 New Zealand Trade and Enterprise;
 - 2.7 New Zealand Transport Agency;
 - 2.8 Tertiary Education Commission;
- 3 **note** phase 2 will commence on 1 November 2027 and include:
 - 3.1 Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand;
 - 3.2 Education New Zealand;
 - 3.3 Education Payroll Limited;
 - 3.4 Electoral Commission;
 - 3.5 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;
 - 3.6 Fire and Emergency New Zealand;
 - 3.7 Financial Markets Authority;
 - 3.8 Maritime New Zealand;
 - 3.9 Network for Learning Limited;
 - 3.10 New Zealand School Property Agency;
 - 3.11 Pharmaceutical Management Agency;
 - 3.12 Research and Education Advanced Network New Zealand Limited;
 - 3.13 Water Services Authority;

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3.14 WorkSafe New Zealand;

- 4 **note** that the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government, and the Minister of Finance, will present the direction to the House of Representatives by 3 September 2026 to ensure the direction is given before the 2026 General Election;
- 5 **agree** that the Government Chief Digital Officer, with the approval of the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government, and the Minister of Finance, will set the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders across the digital investment lifecycle, including all funding pathways, and before the direction comes into effect – this will ensure the direction’s successful implementation from day one and will evolve over time as wider system changes progress; and
- 6 **invite** the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government, and Minister of Finance, to report back to Cabinet on the direction’s progress and additional phasing by November 2028.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government

Appendix A. Whole of Government Direction to Crown Entities on Centralising Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making

Direction on Centralising Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making

- 1 The Direction on Centralising Digital Investment and Procurement Decision Making (the direction) is made by the Minister for the Public Service and Digitising Government and the Minister of Finance (Joint Ministers) in accordance with section 107 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 (the Act).
- 2 A Crown entity under this direction is referred to in this direction as an entity.
- 3 This direction is made to entities listed in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2.
- 4 The commencement date of this direction is 2 November 2026 for Schedule 1 entities and 1 November 2027 for Schedule 2 entities.
- 5 The intent is to apply the direction to all entities over time. Entities not listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 should consider the direction as an expression of government policy in the interim. While these entities are not obliged to follow the direction, they may choose to opt in on a case-by-case basis following consultation with the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO).

Earlier directions under section 107 of the Act superseded

- 6 This direction supersedes and replaces the following directions:
 - a. All-of-Government Shared Authentication Services Direction dated 21 July 2008 (18 September 2008) 141 New Zealand Gazette 3844.
 - b. ICT Functional Leadership Direction dated 22 April 2014 (19 June 2014) 65 New Zealand Gazette 141.

Purpose of this direction

- 7 This direction is about digital investment and procurement, and the use of digital products or services by an entity, regardless of how it is funded.
- 8 The direction implements Government's decision to centralise digital investment and procurement decision making with the GCDO, based on clear criteria.

Limits on this direction

- 9 The direction does not apply if, and to the extent that, the direction contravenes section 113 of the Act.
- 10 This direction is subject to all directions, guidance, tools, templates, and any other artefacts created by or issued under the mandate of the Procurement System Leader (GOV-23-MIN-0025 refers) and under the Procurement Functional Leadership Whole of Government Direction 2014.

An entity must act consistently with the Digital Government Target State

- 11 An entity must ensure its digital investment and procurement, or use of any digital product or service:
 - a. contributes to achieving the Digital Government Target State;
 - b. is consistent with the digital investment and procurement principles; and

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- c. is consistent with the roles and responsibilities under the direction as issued to entities in a GCDO standard or circular.

- 12 If an entity is not clear about how (11) (a), (b) or (c) applies to them, they must seek clarification from the GCDO.

An entity must comply with a standard or circular issued by the GCDO

- 13 The GCDO will, from time to time, issue a 'standard' or 'circular' to entities under the direction which entities must comply with.
- 14 The policy in a standard or circular will be set by Joint Ministers. The GCDO will endeavour to consult with an entity on the matters in a standard or a circular before issuing it, if and where it is reasonable and practical to do so.
- 15 An entity must consider the matters in a standard or circular issued by the GCDO in accordance with this direction.
- 16 The GCDO will publish standards or circulars it issues on www.digital.govt.nz.

An entity must provide information to the GCDO

- 17 An entity must provide regular reports to the GCDO, at intervals or times determined by the GCDO, that describe how the entity is achieving, or planning to achieve, the directions in paragraphs (11) (a), (b) or (c).
- 18 An entity must provide the GCDO with information about the entity's investment, procurement or use of a digital product or service if:
 - a. the GCDO requests the information; and
 - b. the purpose of the request is to assist the GCDO to carry out its functions.

An entity must use certain pathways, products or services

- 19 If an entity wishes to procure or use any digital product or service, and the All of Government Digital Portfolio includes a product or service that substantially meets the entity's requirements, the entity must procure or use that product or service.
- 20 An entity must procure and use new digital common capabilities that are relevant to its functions.
- 21 If the GCDO makes a determination under paragraph (22) in respect of any digital investment, procurement or delivery pathway (for example a digital system asset or digital public infrastructure), the entity must use that pathway.

GCDO may make determinations

- 22 For the purposes of paragraph (19), (20) and (21), the GCDO may make a determination to achieve the Digital Government Target State.
- 23 The GCDO must make a determination using clear criteria. The criteria may be subject to change based on the type of determination.
- 24 An entity may only procure or use a digital product or service outside of the All of Government Digital Portfolio if the GCDO determines that no digital product or service substantially meets the entity's requirements.

An entity and GCDO must endeavour to agree to timeframes

- 25 An entity and GCDO must endeavour to agree to the timeframe for investment planning, procuring or using a relevant process, product, or service.
- 26 If despite reasonable endeavours the entity and the GCDO cannot agree on a timeframe, the GCDO may determine the timeframe and direct the entity to comply.

An entity and the GCDO work in partnership to support system level outcomes

- 27 Ongoing engagement and continuous improvement are essential under the direction. All parties must seek to engage and work together in good faith to support system level outcomes for New Zealand.

Interpretation

- 28 In this direction:
 - a. **All of Government Digital Portfolio** means the collection of digital products and services by that name that is managed by the GCDO.
 - b. **Common capabilities** means digital products and services the majority of Public Service agencies and entities consume, defined as part of the Digital Government Target State.
 - c. **Digital system asset** means an information technology component that is owned or run by a government organisation for reuse by multiple government organisations as part of the Digital Government Target State. It can include hardware, software, data, intellectual property, platforms, systems, or their components.
 - d. **Digital Government Target State** means the all of government digital direction that includes digital strategy, architecture, investment, procurement, and service delivery. It identifies the common technologies and platforms to be used across government and establishes the principles, standards, and guidelines with which government agencies and entities must adhere to. It will be maintained and updated on an ongoing basis to remain current and to respond to emerging opportunities.
 - e. **Digital investment and procurement principles** means the principles by that name available at www.digital.govt.nz.
 - f. **Digital product or service** means any information technology, good or service an entity relies on to run its technology and provide digital services to the public. For example, software platforms, networks, and supporting services.
 - g. **Digital public infrastructure** means shared digital system assets identified as digital public infrastructure in the Digital Government Target State and published in a register of digital system assets.
 - h. **Procurement or delivery pathway** means the GCDO managed process for centralised procurement of a digital system asset which may include digital public infrastructure.

I N C O N F I D E N C E

Schedule 1: Crown entities covered by the direction from 2 November 2026

#	Crown entity	Monitoring Agency
1	Accident Compensation Corporation	The Treasury
2	Health New Zealand	Ministry of Health
3	Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities	Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport
4	Natural Hazards Commission	The Treasury
5	New Zealand Qualifications Authority	Ministry of Education
6	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
7	New Zealand Transport Agency	Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport
8	Tertiary Education Commission	Ministry of Education

Schedule 2: Crown entities covered by the direction from 1 November 2027

#	Crown entity	Monitoring Agency
1	Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand	Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport
2	Education New Zealand	Ministry of Education
3	Education Payroll Limited	The Treasury
4	Electoral Commission	Ministry of Justice
5	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
6	Fire and Emergency New Zealand	Department of Internal Affairs
7	Financial Markets Authority	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
8	Maritime New Zealand	Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport
9	Network for Learning Limited	The Treasury
10	New Zealand School Property Agency	Ministry of Education
11	Pharmaceutical Management Agency	Ministry of Health
12	Research and Education Advanced Network New Zealand Limited	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
13	Water Services Authority	Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport
14	WorkSafe New Zealand	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment