

NEWS & MEDIA

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Budget 2023 - Ministry of Justice | Te Tāhū o te Ture

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Justice Cluster approach

The Justice Cluster was one of two pilots established for Budget 2022, with the aim of supporting more efficient and effective cross sector investment beyond the annual Budget cycle.

The multi-year funding approach is designed to deliver improved and enduring wellbeing outcomes for New Zealanders.

For justice sector agencies, the focus is on four priorities:

- Better outcomes for victims
- Improving access to justice
- Addressing issues with remand
- Better enabled organisations and workforce

Progress across key Ministry of Justice Budget initiatives in the past year has included:

Strengthening Legal Aid

- Budget 2022 funding across four years: \$148.741 million
- Funding across 2023/24: \$39.833 million

Changes to legal aid have now been implemented, meaning improved access to justice for people who cannot afford a lawyer.

From 1 January 2023 eligibility settings for legal aid increased by 15%, making approximately 93,000 more people eligible for aid. Increases to repayment thresholds came into effect at the same time, meaning people receiving legal aid may receive lower repayment amounts as well.

Remuneration for legal aid lawyers has also increased, with hourly rates increasing by 12% on 1 July 2022. This is aimed at encouraging legal aid lawyers to provide the service and supporting access to justice for New Zealanders.

So far in 2022/23, this funding has meant:

- An estimated 6,700 people have received lower repayments amount due to the changes in repayment settings.
- Over 2,700 people have not had to pay the \$50 user charge on their legal aid grants
- Over 50,000 new legal aid grants are able to claim higher fees for hourly rates and hearing times, as well as all previous grants.

Te Au Reka

Since going to market in October last year, the Ministry and judiciary are now well on the way to finding a vendor to work with them on designing and implementing Te Au Reka.

They are currently working through the final stages of the procurement process.

Te Au Reka will modernise the way New Zealand's courts and tribunals operate, supporting judicial decision making, court and tribunal management, and enabling participants to engage with courts and tribunals online.

Te Ao Mārama

- Budget 2022 funding: up to \$47.440 million over four years
- Funding across 2023/24: \$11.726 million

Te Ao Mārama is a judicially-led programme that is partnering with iwi and local communities to bring best practice approaches from solution-focused and therapeutic courts into the mainstream of the

wider District Court.

The design of Te Ao Mārama continued over the past year and Kaitiāia District Court was announced as the next location. Three District Court sites so far have been announced as Te Ao Mārama locations: Kaitiāia, Gisborne and Hamilton.

Strengthening court security

- Budget 2022 funding: \$22.798 million over four years
- Funding in 2023/24: \$5.899 million

This initiative will see 50 new court security officers appointed.

This will ensure courts can continue to support the health, safety and security of all court users.

Victims of Crime – Improving Outcomes Initiative: \$45.70m over four years

Budget 2022 provided funding of up to \$45.70m over four years towards improving outcomes for victims of crime.

In April the Government announced a comprehensive package of practical changes, designed to give victims more rights and support in the justice system.

The Government will introduce a Bill focusing on changes in three areas: sexual violence against children, litigation abuse in family proceedings and giving greater choice to victims of sexual violence around name suppression decisions.

Legislative changes will be funded from baseline.

Three pilot programmes will aim to improve safety and help navigate the court system for victims of serious crime; strengthen support for child victims of sexual violence; and ensure victim's views are provided in bail decisions.

Victim Support will receive an additional \$3 million in funding, and \$2.2 million in additional funding will be provided to the Victim Assistance Scheme.

Victim Assistance Scheme - additional funding of \$4.100 million per year from 2023/24

The Victim Assistance Scheme provides practical and financial help and supports victims' participation in the justice system.

Each year the scheme distributes grants to families bereaved by homicide, and victims of sexual violence and other serious crime.

This initiative will fund around 6,500 additional grants each year.

(This in addition to an extra \$2.2m of funding for the scheme, recently announced as part of changes to give victims more rights and support [↗](#) in the justice system)

Improvements to the coronial system

- Budget 2022 funding across four years; \$28.455 million
- Funding across 2023/24: \$8.268 million

Through Budget 2022, the Government delivered a package of investment to improving the coronial system and reduce delays for grieving families and whānau.

This included funding to appoint an additional four permanent full-time coroners, establish new associate coroner positions, increase the number of support staff, and establish a new team of clinical advisors led by New Zealand's first ever Chief Clinical Advisor for the Coroners Court.

The clinical advisor team will:

- work alongside coroners and forensic pathologists to ensure coroners have high quality clinical information to support decisions, such as whether to accept or decline jurisdiction, or where a post-mortem examination is required;
- support coroners with the clinical aspects of their case work; and
- deliver educational initiatives to health professionals to improve awareness of coronial processes.

Budget 2023 – Vote Courts and Justice

Funding (outside the Budget 2022 Justice Cluster multi-year funding package.)

Criminal Cases Review Commission (Vote Justice)

This initiative provides funding to support the Criminal Cases Review Commission – Te Kāhui Tātari Ture, and to manage a higher than anticipated volume of applications in a timely manner.

This supports access to justice for people who have been wrongfully convicted, particularly for Māori who comprise 38 percent of applications to Te Kāhui Tātari Ture.

\$4.816 million over four years

Office of the Privacy Commissioner (Vote Justice)

Funding for additional staffing in the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to strengthen its compliance and enforcement function so it can continue its support for agencies in meeting their Privacy Act 2020 obligations.

\$3.118 million over four years

Law Commission - Te Aka Matua o te Ture (Vote Justice)

This funding will support the Law Commission – Te Aka Matua o te Ture to meet its statutory functions and continue its existing service levels.

\$0.848 million over four years

Te Aorerekura

Te Puna Aonui agencies, including the Ministry of Justice, are responsible for implementing Te Aorerekura – the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

Budget 2023 funding allocated to the Ministry of Justice will support the delivery of Te Aorerekura.

For more information [see](#) [here](#) 

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This page was last updated: 23rd January 2024

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