

# McGuinness Institute

27 November 2025

Opening remarks: The focus on the Public Finance Act 1989 was on making the relationship between ‘a department’ and ‘a Minister’ more transparent and interconnected. It is therefore timely to look at making the relationship between the ‘public’ and ‘Parliament’ more transparent and interconnected through improvements to performance reporting and public accountability (i.e. your terms of reference).

- 1. Clarity over goals.**
- 2. Clarity over technical terminology.**  
Over the years we have had strategic result areas, focus areas, 10 Better Public Services targets (English), 9 Government Targets, see slide 2 (Luxon), December Budget (fiscal objectives and policy objectives).
- 3. Require a consolidated annual report.**  
To sit as commentary alongside the consolidated financial statements. This should set out the goals of government.
- 4. Require a consolidated climate statement for all of government.**
- 5. Require a list of government department strategies to be listed in government department annual reports.**
- 6. Choices need to be made over what is useful and relevant, and what level of assurance is required (e.g. timely information may not be able to be accurate).**
- 7. Get AI-ready public documents – high level of protection and assurance.**

# Nine Target Areas

See <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2025-08/gt-quarterly-report-summary-jun25.pdf>

Target Quarterly Report Summary and Fact Sheets for quarter ending 30 June 2025							
	TARGET	Baseline	Previous Quarter	Current Quarter	Previous Status	Current Status	SUMMARY
1	<b>Shorter stays in emergency departments</b> 95% of patients to be admitted, discharged, or transferred from an emergency department within six hours.	68.0% (Sep 2023)	72.1% (Dec 2024)	74.2% (Mar 2025)			Improved quarterly results and improved results compared with the same quarter in the prior year. Despite demand continuing to grow, more patients were seen within 6 hours this quarter.
2	<b>Shorter wait times for elective treatment</b> 95% of people wait less than four months for elective treatment.	62.0% (Sep 2023)	59.2% (Dec 2024)	57.3% (Mar 2025)			Results have declined compared to the previous quarter, however have improved compared with the same quarter in the prior year. The Government's 'elective boost' has delivered over 12,000 additional elective procedures (as of 1 June).
3	<b>Reduced child and youth offending</b> 15% reduction in the total number of children and young people (<900 people) with serious and persistent offending behaviour.	1,100 (Jun 2023)	942 (Feb 2025)	938 (May 2025)			Target on track. A continued reduction in the number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour, with a decrease of 4 since the last quarterly report.
4	<b>Reduced violent crime</b> 20,000 fewer people who are victims of an assault, robbery, or sexual assault (165,000 people).	185,000 (Oct 2023)	157,144 (Feb 2025)	156,048 (May 2025)			Target on track. There has been a reduction of ~29,000 people experiencing violent crime from the baseline. The Government is focused on continuing to reduce victims of violent crime, noting that quarterly results may fluctuate.
5	<b>Fewer people on the Jobseeker Support benefit</b> 50,000 fewer people on Jobseeker Support benefit (140,000 people).	190,000 (Dec 2023)	209,800 (Mar 2025)	216,000 (Jun 2025)			6,200 more people are receiving the Jobseeker Support Benefit since the last report. Flows onto Jobseeker Support Benefit are expected to decrease as economic conditions improve, and as welfare system interventions are embedded over 2025 and 2026.
6	<b>Increased student attendance</b> 80% of students are present for more than 90% of the term.	59.0% (T1, 2023)	56.5% (T4, 2024)	65.9% (T1, 2025)			Improvement from Term 1 2024 to Term 1 2025. A trial of the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework, which encourages regular student attendance, was completed in Term 2 and is on track to be updated in August 2025.
7	<b>More students at expected curriculum levels</b> 80% of Year 8 students at or above the expected curriculum level for their age in reading, writing and maths by December 2030.	Baseline 22% Maths (2023) 47% Reading (2023) 24% Writing (2024)	Current 23% Maths (2024) 47% Reading (2023) 24% Writing (2024)				The 2024 Curriculum Insights and Progress Study has provided a baseline for Writing and the second data point for Maths, which shows stable 2024 results against the 2023 results.
8	<b>Fewer people in emergency housing</b> 75% fewer households in emergency housing (<800 households).	3,141 (Dec 2023)	528 (Mar 2025)	501 (Jun 2025)			Target on track. The number of households in emergency housing has reduced by 84% from baseline. As of 30 June, 1,041 Priority One households (with 2,220 children) have been housed in a social housing tenancy.
9	<b>Reduced net greenhouse gas emissions</b> On track to meet New Zealand's 2050 net zero climate change targets, with total net emissions of no more than 290 megatonnes from 2022 to 2025 and 305 megatonnes from 2026 to 2030.	N/A	N/A	284.1 Mt		EB1	No change this quarter as the Target is informed by annual Ministry for the Environment emissions projections. The most recent projections were published 11 December 2024, and give confidence that New Zealand is on track for the first and second emissions budgets (EB1 and EB2).

On Track
 Probable
 Feasible
 At Risk
 Unachievable

## Supporting links

1. XRB discussion on ‘public accountability’  
See <https://www.xrb.govt.nz/dmsdocument/5470> (para 7-10) and <https://www.xrb.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4654>
2. McGuinness Institute Working Paper 2016/01 – History of strategy stewardship in the New Zealand public service 1980–2016  
See <https://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/publications/working-papers>
3. Government Department Strategies Index Handbook 2024  
See <https://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/publications/books-journals-and-other-publications>
4. English (10 Better Public Services targets)  
See <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/90385629/bill-english-government-planning-new-public-service-targets-with-2021-deadline>
5. Luxon (9 Government Targets and Coalition Government’s Action Plan for New Zealand)  
See <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/government-targets>. Published by DPMC.  
See <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/taxonomy/term/6700?page=14>, but it is difficult to find. Look for 7 October 2025 date. The Q4 plan can be found here: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2025-10/Q4%20Plan%202025.pdf> The checklist for Q3 can be found here: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2025-10/Q3%20Checklist%202025.pdf>. Both are published on the press release website of the Beehive by date.
6. Government priorities  
See <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/about/who-we-are/corporate-publications/strategic-intentions/strategic-intentions-2023-28/supporting-government-priorities>
7. AI-Ready public documents: McGuinness Institute Think Piece 43 – Unlocking Government documents with AI  
See <https://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/publications/think-pieces>