

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General Accounting Policies

The Public Accounts comprise the 5 operating accounts established by sections 38 to 42 of the Public Finance Act 1977, together with a suspense account created under section 37 (1) (c) of that Act, and the National Roads Fund established by section 22 of the National Roads Act 1953. A brief description of each of the operating accounts is given in the introduction to this summary. The Suspense Account is a clearing account for receipts banked to the Public Account.

The "Public Account" refers to the bank account of that name kept at the Reserve Bank of New Zealand.

This summary reflects only those transactions relating to departments or activities operating within the Public Account. It does not reflect transactions of accounts to which sections 68 and 69 of the Public Finance Act apply. All transactions are reported on the cash basis of accounting.

The amounts shown in this summary represent the cumulative result of transactions from the beginning of the financial year at historic cost.

Recognition of Receipts and Payments

Receipts for money paid into the Public Account are initially credited to the Suspense Account. The receipts are subsequently recognised by debiting the Suspense Account when the revenue receiver advises Treasury of the particular account code to be credited. The balance to the credit of the Suspense Account at the end of each accounting period is disclosed in the Summary of Balances.

Payments are brought to charge as expenditure in two ways:

- if money is paid from the Public Account Disbursement Account, it is recognised as a payment immediately.
- if money was paid from an imprest account, it is recognised as a payment when Treasury is advised of the particular account code to be debited. Money advanced to Imprestees but remaining unspent at the end of each accounting period forms part of the cash balances.

Particular Accounting Policies

The following particular accounting policies which affect the contents of the accounts have been adopted—

Recognition of Interdepartmental Transactions

Transactions occurring between Government Departments are recognised on the following basis:

- if it was a cash transaction, then the accounting policy on recognition of receipts and payments above applies.
- if it was a non-cash transaction, then the transaction is recognised when Treasury is advised of the accounting codes to be credited and debited.

Foreign Currencies

As a general rule receipts and payments are converted into New Zealand currency at a special exchange rate fixed at the mid-point between the buying and selling rates for each foreign currency quoted by the Reserve Bank. This rate is retained until it is at variance by 2 percent with the actual mid-point of the buying and selling rate.

All rates are adjusted on an official revaluation and on 1 March in each year.

Any gains or losses arising from differences between actual rates of exchange used for transactions and the special mid-point rate are disclosed in the public accounts.

An exception to the general rule is made for certain types of receipts such as the proceeds from loans raised overseas and repatriated to New Zealand. In these cases the exchange rate used is the actual bank rate at which the foreign currency was converted to New Zealand dollars.

Investments

Investments of Public Account Balances are recorded at cost price in foreign currency and converted at the mid-point exchange rate into New Zealand dollars. These investments are subsequently adjusted when changes occur in the mid-point exchange rates. Capital gains or losses arising from investment transactions are recognised when realised and are disclosed in the public accounts. Balances of investments in Companies and Government Agencies are not reported in quarterly summaries.

Changes in Accounting Policies

There have been two changes in accounting policies in respect of the Reserve Bank indemnity, which is payable under section 26 of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 1964 to reimburse the bank for the net depreciation in its overseas assets and liabilities arising from changes in currency values in the period between 1 March and 28 February. The calculation of the indemnity includes both actual or realised losses for the period and estimated losses on forward transactions.

The changes in accounting policies are as follows:

- The total claim on the Reserve Bank indemnity for 1984–85 includes full payment for realised and unrealised exchange losses. In previous years only realised losses were settled.
- The policy of settling the indemnity by the issue of non-interest bearing stock was discontinued. This year settlement has been made by a cash payment from the Consolidated Account rather than Loans Account.

With the above exceptions there have been no changes in accounting policies, which have accordingly been applied on bases consistent with those used in previous years.