

Ex Post Budget oversight in New Zealand

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Scrutiny by committees

Scrutiny of the Executive primarily carried out by select committees through:

- Financial scrutiny
- Reports from Officers of Parliament
- Inquiries
- Briefings
- Petitions

Select committees

- 13 subject committees do most scrutiny work
- Appointed by House
- Proportional
- Elect own chair
- Consider business referred by House and initiated by committee
- Report to House

Subject areas

Committees have wide subject areas

- Justice and Electoral: courts, Crown legal and drafting services electoral matters, human rights, and justice.
- Health: health.
- Finance and Expenditure: audit of financial statements of the Government and departments, Government finance, revenue and taxation.

Ex Post financial scrutiny

- Starts with presentation of annual report
- Covers all state agencies
- Examines financial and service performance over previous financial year and current operations
- Allocated by FEC
- Carried out by all subject committees (including FEC)

Scrutiny process

1. Committees send written questions
2. Advice from Auditor-General
3. Senior managers give evidence in public
4. Report to the House
5. All documents released online
6. Debated

Role of supreme audit institution

- Controller and Auditor-General an officer of Parliament
- Appointed and funded by Parliament
- Statutory independence
- Performance and financial audit of state sector
- Carries out self-directed inquiries
- Supports scrutiny by legislature

Support for legislatures' scrutiny

- Auditor-General advises committees on results of audits
- Suggests lines of inquiry
- Checks draft reports for factual accuracy
- Assist/advises individual members
- Consults House on its proposed work programme
- Assistance set out in protocol

Ex Post review & Ex Ante scrutiny

- No strong connection in NZ (seen as annual cycle)
- All scrutiny by subject committees
- Committees briefed on previous issues by committee staff
- Written questions to entities similar for ex-post and ex-ante review (allows comparison)
- Committee questions tend to be focused on programmes or outputs but not outcomes

Likely future developments

- Government has signalled changes to public finance to have sector-wide focus on outcomes
- More service delivery from NGOs
- Subject committee scrutiny will change
- Role for a PBO