

The 2012 Long-Term Fiscal Schools Challenge

What is this?

1. There is a legislative requirement for the Treasury to produce a long-term fiscal statement at least every four years. The Treasury is aiming to publish the next one in March 2013.
2. The statement provides projections of the long-term fiscal position, identifies and analyses a range of options to address the long-term fiscal position.
3. In the lead-up to the March 2013 publication, the Treasury is running the Long-Term Fiscal Schools Challenge. This offers Year 12 and 13 students an exciting opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of the Treasury in analysing and advising on one of the major issues facing governments across the world – long-run sustainability of government finances.
4. Secondary school teams from across the country will be invited to propose policy options that address New Zealand's long-term fiscal challenges, and present their proposals to a panel of judges from the Treasury and Victoria University. Teams will be assessed on their understanding of the issues, the originality and practicality of their analysis, and their presentation skills.
5. Prizes are sponsored by Victoria University. Each member of the winning team will receive an iPad2 or laptop valued at \$800 and a scholarship valued at \$2,000 to study at Victoria University. Each member of the second and third-placed teams will receive an iPad2 or laptop valued at \$800. The winning team will spend a day at The Treasury and meet the Chief Executive.

Why are you running it?

6. Long-term fiscal sustainability will be one of the most critical challenges facing New Zealand, and indeed the world, over the coming decades.
7. New Zealand, like most other developed countries, is in the midst of a permanent change in the structure of its population. An ageing profile began more than a century ago; we are currently entering an accelerating phase, which is placing increasing pressure on government finances.
8. Future New Zealand governments will face challenges and choices in securing the sustainability of the Crown's long-term fiscal position. If no changes are made to current policies over the coming decades, they will become increasingly expensive.
9. It is hoped that this project will encourage fresh ideas about the long-term fiscal challenges that New Zealand faces, from a generation that will be affected by the outcomes.
10. The challenge will also promote the study of economics and related disciplines in schools and provide students with an insight into what a career in public policy could involve.

Who is involved?

11. For secondary school students, this is a challenge for their lifetime - The ageing of our population is expected to have wide-ranging fiscal implications for government tax and spending programmes in the future. Their generation will be affected by the changes.
12. Treasury staff are running coaching sessions with schools in the week of March 19. The top teams will be brought to the Treasury on May 31 to present their ideas to a panel of experts from the Treasury and Victoria University of Wellington. The winning team will be announced on June 8 and will return to Wellington later in the year to receive its prizes and spend a day at the Treasury.
13. Nineteen schools (over 70 students) from around the country have registered for the challenge.

Otago/Southland

- Central Southland College
- Columba College
- James Hargest College
- Otago Boys High School
- Wakatipu High School

Nelson

- Waimea College

Canterbury

- Burnside High School
- Christchurch Boys High School
- Christchurch Girls High School
- Lincoln High School

Wellington

- Hutt Valley High School
- Scots College
- St Mary's College
- Taita College

Hastings

- Lindisfarne College

Hamilton

- Hamilton Boys High School

Auckland

- Auckland Grammar School
- Mount Albert Grammar School
- Onehunga High School

When is it taking place?

March 2012	
<i>19-23 March</i>	<i>Regional coaching sessions</i> Treasury analysts will hold a half-day coaching session within each region for participating teams, to further work through the issues with students and get teams started in assessing the options.
April 2012	
<i>Tues 24 April</i>	<i>Written submissions due</i> All participating teams must send their written submissions by 5pm.
<i>30 April-4 May</i>	<i>Top teams chosen</i> The top teams will be chosen, based on their written submissions, and will be sent an invitation to present their submissions in Wellington
May 2012	
<i>Thurs 24 May</i>	<i>Presentation slides due</i> Teams' presentation slides must be sent by 5pm. Students are encouraged to practise their presentations in front of their class or school assembly in preparation for the trip to Wellington.
<i>Thurs 31 May</i>	<i>Presentations in Wellington</i> The top teams will travel to the Treasury to present their oral submissions to a panel of judges. Teams will have lunch at the Treasury and visit sites including Victoria University's Commerce Faculty and Parliament.
June 2012	
<i>Fri 8 June</i>	<i>Winning team announced</i> The name of the winning team will be posted on the Schools Challenge webpage.
Aug-Nov 2012	
<i>To be agreed</i>	<i>Prize-giving</i> The winning team will return to Wellington to receive its prize, spend a day at the Treasury, and meet the Chief Executive.

How can I find out more?

<http://www.treasury.govt.nz/government/longterm/schoolschallenge>

Serene Ambler, Senior Communications Adviser
Ph (04) 917 6163 or serene.ambler@treasury.govt.nz