

BORDER EXECUTIVE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Final report as an interdepartmental executive board

1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025

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Border Executive Board Final Annual Report 1 July to 31 December 2025

This document is presented to the House of Representatives pursuant to section 44 of the Public Finance Act 1989 (the Act).

It is the final Annual Report of the Border Executive Board (BEB), as required under section 45J of the Act, as it has been disestablished as an interdepartmental executive board. The disestablishment removes the requirement for annual reports under the Act.

The BEB has a waiver from the Minister of Finance, under section 45AB of the Act from the requirement to include financial statements in this Annual Report. The waiver covers the financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The Border System Performance appropriation, which supported the BEB in 2025/26, is administered by the New Zealand Customs Service (Customs). As the administrator, performance information for the appropriation will be reported in Customs' Annual Report.

Financial information about the BEB's assets, liabilities, expenditure, and revenue will be included in Customs' Annual Report.

Overview from the board

This is the final Annual Report of the Border Executive Board (BEB) as an interdepartmental executive board (IEB).

The work of the BEB and its member agencies continues, as the need for coordinated management of a safer and smarter border for New Zealand remains critical.

Highlights for July to December 2025 included:

- embedded new border processing services for international scheduled flights at Hamilton and Dunedin airports
- completed input into the first Regulatory Airport Spatial Undertakings for six airports so that government agencies have the space needed for their regulatory activities, balanced with the commercial needs of industry
- started working with the Port of Auckland to establish border services at the new cruise terminal on Bledisloe Wharf
- completed initial due diligence on the benefits of a maritime single window that would digitise arrival information. The work informed the decision to progress to a discovery phase to further understand requirements, user engagement, and costs.

Achievements as an interdepartmental executive board

This final Annual Report takes the opportunity to highlight some of the BEB’s achievements since it started in January 2021. These are shown on pages 12 and 13.

The first years of the BEB were dominated by the COVID-19 response, maintaining traveller and goods movement within constraints, and then fully reopening the border. The work was relentless, required agencies to work closely together and with industry, and to be agile as requirements changed.

As New Zealand and the world resumed aviation and maritime travel, the BEB focused on ensuring the border operated as smoothly as possible for business and travellers.

One of the enduring achievements of the BEB is the stronger connections across border agencies and with industry. The BEB created engagement opportunities through the joint work programme and network groups.

Having the familiarity and regularity of engagement to share what’s working and what’s challenging, grew a deeper understanding of the border as a system and let agencies respond quickly when needed.

The positives from being an IEB will be continued as a sector leadership group.

The governance board as at 31 December 2025

<p>Christine Stevenson Chair and Comptroller of Customs Inaugural member</p>	<p>Ray Smith Director-General of Primary Industries Inaugural member</p>	<p>Ruth Fairhall Acting Secretary for Transport From 24 February 2025</p>
<p>Suzanne Stew Acting Chief Executive, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment From 27 September 2025</p>	<p>Bede Corry Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade From 30 June 2024</p>	<p>Audrey Sonerson Director-General of Health From 12 December 2022 as Secretary for Transport, then Health from 7 April 2025</p>

Statement of responsibility

In our opinion, as the members of the Border Executive Board, this report fairly reflects the operations for 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025, and progress of the Border Executive Board.

Approved: 19 February 2026



Christine Stevenson

Chair
Comptroller of Customs

New Zealand Customs Service



Ray Smith

Director-General of Primary
Industries

Ministry for Primary Industries



Nic Blakeley

Chief Executive and
Secretary for Economic
Growth

Ministry of Business,
Innovation and Employment



Brad Ward

Acting Chief Executive and
Secretary for Transport

Ministry of Transport



Bede Corry

Chief Executive and
Secretary of Foreign Affairs and
Trade

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Trade



Audrey Sonerson

Chief Executive and
Director-General of Health

Ministry of Health

About the Border Executive Board

The BEB started in January 2021 as the first interdepartmental executive board under the Public Service Act 2020.

In October 2025, Cabinet agreed that the BEB would change to a sector leadership group and continue to coordinate the management of a safer and smarter New Zealand border.

This Annual Report covers the final reporting period as an interdepartmental executive board from 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025.

The border is important to New Zealand

New Zealand's border is a strategic asset. It is important to the economy, society, and individuals.

A strong and efficient border supports a growing economy through trade, tourism, and the collection of Crown revenue.

Effective border security keeps New Zealand's economy, environment, and people safe from a range of threats, including biosecurity pest and disease incursions, human and health diseases, transnational, serious and organised crime, wildlife smuggling, human trafficking, and illicit drug and firearm smuggling.

The border must be strong today and evolve for the future, responding to changing risks and threats, while continuing facilitation of compliant people, goods, and craft.

Joint leadership and action

The BEB provided collective leadership and accountability for New Zealand's border by:

- looking at the whole-of-the-border, rather than single-agency outcomes
- helping border agencies act in a coordinated way when they work with public and private organisations
- providing a contact point for government and industry
- maintaining connection and trust across border agencies to respond quickly to issues and threats
- continuing the commitment to a safe and smart border and working with stakeholders.

Direction

The BEB published its strategic direction for 2024-2028. <https://www.customs.govt.nz/about-us/border-executive-board/released-information/strategic-direction-border-executive-board>

Funding

The BEB was a very small entity funded by Vote Customs.

Accountability

The chief executive members of the governance board were jointly accountable for the performance of the BEB. All six agencies were represented on the board.

Chief executives were accountable for their agency's contribution to the BEB. Each retained responsibility for the overall performance of their own agency and accountability to individual portfolio ministers.

The Minister of Customs was responsible for the BEB.

How the BEB worked

The work of the BEB was led by the governance board and delivered in partnership with its member agencies and the Secretariat Team.

The BEB set an annual work programme and monitored progress, risks, and opportunities during the year.

The priorities for 2025/26 took into consideration the Cabinet accountabilities, strategic directions, Border Sector Strategy, operating environment, and the conditions and priorities of the member agencies.

Information about the BEB as a sector leadership group is on page 14.

<p>Ministerial engagement</p>	<p>The responsible Minister for the BEB was the Minister of Customs, the Hon Casey Costello. Border-related Ministerial portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customs - Biosecurity - Immigration - Transport - Health - Foreign Affairs - Trade - Tourism 	
<p>Accountabilities as an IEB</p>	<p>Border Executive Board</p> <p>Coordinates the management of a safe and smart New Zealand border.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border improvements. • Addressing gaps in end-to-end border processes and being ready to respond to a significant event. • Addressing risks and opportunities where not already managed. • A financially sustainable border system using cost recovery. • Leadership to support a positive user experience with the border system. 	
<p>Member agencies' border functions</p>	<p>New Zealand Customs Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk-informed assessment, inspection, and clearance of travellers, goods, and craft. • Revenue collection. • Disruption of illicit/illegal goods and organised crime. • Trade facilitation and assistance. 	<p>Ministry for Primary Industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosecurity system leadership (off-shore, at the border, and domestic). • Trade facilitation and policy advice. • Risk-informed assessment, inspection, and clearance of travellers, goods, and craft for biosecurity protection. • Approval and oversight of transitional/containment facilities.
	<p>Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant visas to stay temporarily or permanently. • Ensure that people crossing the border and staying in New Zealand are entitled to do so. • Combat and prevent trafficking in persons and irregular migration. 	<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholding New Zealand's international obligations relating to the border. • Deploying funding to strengthen partner countries' border capacity.
	<p>Ministry of Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring appropriate legislative and policy settings for health security to enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - surveillance of, and response to, health threats at the border - implementation of routine border health controls - implementation of the International Health Regulations 2005. • Monitoring department for Health New Zealand. 	<p>Ministry of Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advice, system leadership and stewardship, Crown entity governance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Civil Aviation Authority</i> Regulatory activity, aviation security (passenger, non-passenger, and baggage screening) - <i>Maritime New Zealand</i> Regulatory activity.
<p>Working in partnership with</p>	<p>Border Crown entities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health New Zealand. • Civil Aviation Authority. • Maritime New Zealand. 	<p>Stakeholders and regulated parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport and maritime port operators. • Airlines and cruise operators. • Importers and exporters. • Travellers.

Progress on strategic intentions 2024-2028

The strategic intentions document, as an interdepartmental executive board, remains relevant and will be used to inform the work of the BEB as a sector leadership group, until it is revised.

The Border Executive Board is here to

Provide collective leadership and accountability for New Zealand's border

Our core functions are to

Remove gaps in border processes

Ensure future risks from people, goods, and craft are addressed

Make strategic improvements to the border

We deliver these functions through

Stewardship – lead the border together

Coordination – take an integrated approach

Improvements – identify change with joint initiatives where practical

Success looks like

Issues disrupting the border system are responded to while short- and longer-term risks are managed through system performance and assurance

Seeing a whole-of-border view and providing a combined border voice on shared areas of interest

Changes and improvements are identified where there are benefits to more than one agency or there are shared users

Work is delivered by our member agencies, supported by the BEB Secretariat

Member agencies are responsible for delivering their contribution to the BEB

The BEB Secretariat provides services to the governance board and member agencies

Progress is shown in our Annual Report

Case studies of BEB work supported by information from member agencies, where possible

Border System Performance appropriation measures:

- a work programme with initiatives that respond to risk and drive border system improvement
- satisfaction of information and advice to the responsible Minister



Issues disrupting the border system are responded to while short- and longer-term risks are managed through system performance and assurance

The day-to-day border functions were managed by the member agencies with no action needed from the BEB.

The BEB supported a range of matters through oversight.

- *Aviation slot planning* – the BEB maintained awareness of slot and scheduling changes at airports and the potential implications for the border. The BEB highlighted the importance of, and need for, airports to engage with agencies on changes to enable effective protection and facilitation activity.
- *International passenger flight diversions* – the BEB received assurance about diversion processes when flights were unexpectedly diverted to Hamilton Airport in April 2025. No change was needed by border agencies.
- *Summer 2025/26 readiness* – the BEB coordinated agencies to prepare for peak border processing for small craft, cruise ships, aviation travellers, and goods (particularly fast freight). There were no unusual operational issues or risks to manage.
- *Strategic approach to health at the border* – maintained a health presence within the Integrated Targeting and Operations Centre (ITOC), distributed the weekly health surveillance report to show emerging threats and if escalated border protection was needed, and kept a strong connection with border agencies to support health events, such as measles and mosquito surveillance.

- *Measles cases in New Zealand* – the established BEB connection points helped agencies and industry respond to the circulation of measles cases in New Zealand and prepare for potential disruption during summer peak. There was no disruption to border services during summer peak. On 4 February 2026, Health New Zealand advised that the measles outbreak that started in September 2025 can be declared over.

Maintaining efficient and effective leadership of the border

In October 2025, Cabinet agreed to change the BEB from an interdepartmental executive board, under the Public Service Act 2020, to a sector leadership group. The change reflected that:

- legislated joint accountability and participation was appropriate for the COVID-19 response, integrating health into the border, and that responsibility was shared across all chief executive members
- public service arrangements for coordination and oversight need to evolve to be efficient with the use of resources and funding
- the BEB had embedded stronger ways of working that could carry on without legislated direction.

Maintaining a Cabinet mandate and Ministerial oversight ensures the valuable work of the BEB will continue.

More about the BEB as a sector leadership group is on page 14.



Trend: progressed.



Seeing a whole-of-border view and providing a combined border voice on shared areas of interest

Regulatory Airport Spatial Undertakings (RASUs) first round complete

Border agencies completed their input and reviews of RASUs for Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown, Dunedin, and Hamilton airports.

The Acting Secretary for Transport accepted the RASUs for Christchurch, Dunedin, and Queenstown airports on 19 December 2025. The Wellington and Auckland RASUs will be considered following the passing of the Regulatory Systems (Transport) Amendment Bill (expected in April 2026).

Work is ongoing into 2026 as airports will review their RASUs to align with their capital planning and upcoming terminal redevelopments. The BEB will continue to have a role in ensuring agencies are coordinated on current and future requirements.

Embedded new border processing services at Hamilton and Dunedin Airports

The BEB monitored how the new services operated, with both airports working well. The airports were added to the BEB 2025/26 summer readiness assurance update.

The lessons learned were documented and agreed with agencies to apply to similar or other multi-agency work. The information informed guidelines for industry and agencies.

The guidelines for industry summarised the border requirements when airports are considering establishing international services and were shared with the New Zealand Airports Association. These will help a new airport operator understand the complexities of what's involved in setting up international border services in New Zealand.

The guidelines for government agencies provide details on the successful and good practice actions to establish an international airport.

Port of Auckland Bledisloe Wharf new cruise terminal and services

The BEB commissioned and started receiving regular updates on establishing border services for the proposed new cruise terminal. This will ensure all agencies are involved in an end-to-end view of services, and engagement with the Port is streamlined. Development of the new cruise terminal is a Port of Auckland project.

Whole-of-border view

- *Border financial view* – the six-monthly update on fees and levies supported financial sustainability through visibility of cost recovery activity and alignment of engagement with industry.
- *Regulatory status of regional airports* – maintained awareness of activity and regulatory changes at domestic airports, as this can be an early indicator of implications for processing international passengers or goods.
- *Border-related activity in the Pacific* – the annual update on border agency activity with Pacific partners provided oversight and awareness, with no areas for the BEB to address.
- *Border workforce integrity* – the annual update provided a shared understanding of border agency integrity standards, Protective Security Requirement ratings, and progress on the areas of interest relating to shared workplaces and access to shared systems.
- *Forecast planning scenarios for passengers and cargo* – the six-monthly forecasts provided agencies with low, medium, and high scenarios. The published information provides a consistent set of assumptions to inform planning by border and transport agencies.



Trend: progressed.



Changes and improvements are identified where there are benefits to more than one agency or there are shared users

Maritime Single Window

Border agencies are taking a phased approach to understanding the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) mandate for member states to have a centralised digital platform – a maritime single window. The intent is to streamline the exchange of information to clear the arrival, stay, and departure of ships and enhance the efficiency of shipping and trade worldwide.

A phased approach is being taken due to the potential investment required, the complexity of digitisation, and the solution being relevant to multiple organisations and users.

Confirming the benefit

The BEB facilitated agency workshops to understand the mandate, consider the benefits to border agencies and New Zealand, and identify options for further development. All agencies supported improving efficiency.

Gathering more information to understand scope and cost

In December 2025, the BEB agreed that agencies may progress to a discovery phase to understand more about a potential solution and the investment required. This phase would include engagement with industry and funding options.

Next steps

Agencies will report back in 2026 on how the discovery phase could be progressed.

Digital Leaders Group

The Digital Leaders Group continued to meet regularly and keep awareness and alignment of critical systems dependencies and significant projects. This included awareness of key projects such as:

- eGates replacement led by Customs, with MPI and MBIE (INZ)
- exit marshal solutions led by MPI, with Customs
- New Zealand Traveller Declaration enhanced capability led by Customs, with MPI, MBIE (INZ), MoH, and HNZ
- Our Future Services to build a better immigration system by MBIE (INZ)
- Establishing border services at the new Port of Auckland cruise terminal led by MPI and Customs, with MBIE (INZ), MoH, and HNZ.

Abbreviations:

Customs = New Zealand Customs Service

MPI = Ministry for Primary Industries

MBIE = Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

INZ = Immigration New Zealand

MoH = Ministry of Health

HNZ = Health New Zealand

Improving aviation wayfinding

The BEB supported progressing airport wayfinding improvements through existing work, such as replacement eGates and exit marshal solutions. The need for a dedicated piece of work will be revisited when these projects are completed.



Trend: progressed.

Assessment of operations

Implementing the Government’s priorities

The BEB supported the Government’s priority for efficient and effective public services and for agencies to work together by setting and delivering a multi-agency work programme.

Strong management of New Zealand’s border contributed to economic growth, law and order, national security, and prosperity.

The BEB’s annual assurance of the integrity of the border workforce contributed to managing trusted insider threat from transnational, serious and organised crime.

The BEB was not allocated a government priority or target.

Progress to 31 December 2025

There were no significant system issues requiring a BEB response. Member agencies responded to events in their own areas of expertise including:

- biosecurity threat from yellow-legged hornets in Auckland
- transnational serious and organised crime, particularly drug seizures
- measles cases in New Zealand, with Health New Zealand leading the local response.

Organisational health and capability

The BEB was supported by a small Secretariat Team that provided advice and services to the governance board, progressed initiatives with member agencies, and met ministerial and Parliamentary accountability requirements. Secretariat staff are employees of Customs.

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
5 FTE	6 FTE	5 FTE
2022/23	2023/24	31 Dec 2025
5 FTE	6 FTE	2 FTE + 1 vacant role

FTE = full-time equivalent staff

The BEB is not required to report on: equal employment matters; Māori-Crown relationship capability; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and health and safety.

Annual priorities for 2025/26

Complete input into first RASUs	Maritime Single Window options
Achieved Requirements coordinated and provided to airports	Progressing First phase completed. Agreed to consider arrangements in 2026 for a discovery phase
➤ Strategic link: coordination	➤ Strategic link: improvements

Border System Performance appropriation

The financial and performance information in this report is not audited. Final audited information will be included in the New Zealand Customs Service 2026 Annual Report.

Financial

Budget 2025/26:	\$1.950m
Actual spend as at 31 December 2025:	\$613,108

Output performance information

The BEB work programme has initiatives that respond to risk and drive border system improvement (standard: achieved)
As at 31 December 2025: Achieved
Reflects that the BEB manages both immediate and longer-term border matters. It helps the BEB be deliberate in setting joint priorities.
The annual work programme was set in July 2025. It was reviewed and updated in December 2025.
Satisfaction of the responsible Minister with the provision of coordination, information, and advice (standard: meets expectations)
As at 31 December 2025: Meets and sometimes exceeds expectations
Provides an opportunity for the Minister to formally advise if the BEB is meeting expectations.
The Minister of Customs was surveyed as at 31 December 2025 and provided a rating of “meets and sometimes exceeds expectations.”

The BEB did not have vehicle or capital assets. It is not responsible for any business systems.

Achievements as an interdepartmental executive board



Delivered the Government's border response to COVID-19 including reopening the aviation and maritime borders

New Zealand Traveller Declaration | Whakapuakanga Tangata Haere ki Aotearoa

Oversight and support to develop and implement the New Zealand Traveller Declaration



Supported the return of air travel post COVID-19, providing a positive passenger experience with border services



Commitment to governance and oversight, setting clear joint priorities



Established and maintained connections across border agencies by facilitating dedicated network groups



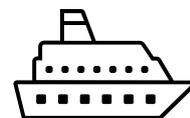
Health now part of the border for stronger connection, planning, and response with agencies



Input into the first Regulatory Airport Spatial Undertakings for six international airports



Established international border processing services at Hamilton and Dunedin airports



Started establishing border services at the new Port of Auckland cruise terminal for 2026

Achievements as an interdepartmental executive board



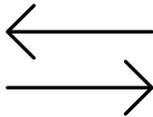
Won the Leadership in Governance award at the 2023 Spirit of Service Awards



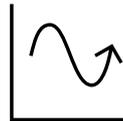
Visibility of border fees and levies, investment, and engagement with stakeholders



Collaboration and assurance that the border was ready for summer and winter peak volumes and changes



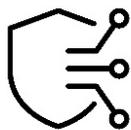
Trans-Tasman seamless travel collaboration with industry and border agencies on options for improvement and alignment



Supporting agency and industry planning with agreed forecast scenarios for passengers and cargo volumes



Supporting the Integrated Targeting and Operations Centre (ITOC) having stronger collaboration to manage risk and respond to events



BEB Digital Border Group identified critical border systems and started oversight of digital change



Maturity assessment completed that informed actions to improve data sharing and privacy



Stronger coordination and response to requests for unscheduled international air services, using ITOC

The BEB as a sector leadership group

The need for coordinated management of a safer and smarter border remains critical to New Zealand. The BEB became a sector leadership group from 1 January 2026.

A better way to work together using embedded arrangements

The interdepartmental executive board (IEB) model was useful where greater clarity on mandate was needed and where effective collaboration did not already exist.

Under the IEB model, the BEB embedded: identifying, setting, and delivering joint initiatives; monitoring progress and the border together; and responding to new risks or events in a coordinated way and in partnership with industry.

Pragmatic accountability and participation

The sector leadership model creates participation levels that better reflect agency engagement with the border but retains a joint commitment to a safer and smarter border.

- Core members – New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry of Transport, and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
- Members as relevant – Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Participants as needed – Civil Aviation Authority, Maritime New Zealand, and Health New Zealand.

What made the BEB a success continues

- Dedicated governance and oversight.
- Dedicated groups with multi-agency participation.
- Dedicated Secretariat Team.
- Use of the BEB name.
- Transparency of direction and performance, with priorities and initiatives agreed by members.

- Ministerial oversight and engagement.
- Working with industry and stakeholders.
- Working with border Crown entities.

Cabinet accountabilities remain with minor updates

- Gaps in end-to-end border processes are addressed, with health risk management integrated and the border ready to respond to significant events.
- Risks from people, goods, and craft arriving and departing the border are addressed and opportunities maximised where these are not already being managed by an existing agency or other government process.
- Identify and oversee strategic border system improvements, including identifying where agencies could work together to progress challenges or opportunities, and where there are interdependencies.
- The border system is financially sustainable through cost recovery, having oversight of fiscal challenges.
- Leadership to facilitate a positive user experience with the border system.

The Minister of Customs continues to be the responsible Minister for the BEB.

Direction

A new terms of reference was agreed in February 2026

<https://www.customs.govt.nz/about-us/border-executive-board>

The Strategic Intentions 2024-2028 document remains relevant and will be used to inform the work of the BEB, until it is revised.

Annual reporting

The New Zealand Customs Service will report the performance of the BEB in its Annual Report as the funding administrator.



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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