

Departmental Disclosure Statement

Rates Rebate Amendment Bill

The departmental disclosure statement for a government Bill seeks to bring together in one place a range of information to support and enhance the Parliamentary and public scrutiny of that Bill.

It identifies:

- the general policy intent of the Bill and other background policy material;
- some of the key quality assurance products and processes used to develop and test the content of the Bill;
- the presence of certain significant powers or features in the Bill that might be of particular Parliamentary or public interest and warrant an explanation.

This disclosure statement was prepared by the Department of Internal Affairs.

The Department of Internal Affairs certifies that, to the best of its knowledge and understanding, the information provided is complete and accurate at the date of finalisation below.

[7 May 2025.]

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Part One: General Policy Statement

The Rates Rebate Amendment Bill (the **Bill**) is intended to provide financial support for low-income SuperGold Card cardholders who may otherwise face financial hardship due to high rates bills.

The Rates Rebate Act 1973 (the **Act**) uses income as the primary threshold for eligibility. The current income abatement threshold of \$31,510 per household (which will increase to \$32,210 on 1 July 2025) excludes many SuperGold Card cardholders from receiving the full benefit of the Rates Rebate Scheme. Rebates are calculated according to a formula that includes the gross income and number of dependants of a ratepayer and their spouse or partner (if applicable) and their rates amount. The level of rebate available decreases for every dollar earned above the income abatement threshold.

This effectively excludes households consisting of couples whose only income is New Zealand superannuation from getting full rebates. Those households face significant rates bills that are on average rising at a higher rate than increases to New Zealand superannuation, meaning that this issue will only compound over time without intervention.

The Bill provides a separate income abatement threshold of \$45,000 for SuperGold Card cardholders, effective as of 1 July 2025. The Act contains a power to amend the specified amounts in section 3(1) by Order in Council. The Bill also provides a limited extension to that power, to enable the income abatement threshold for SuperGold Card cardholders to also be amended by Order in Council.

Part Two: Background Material and Policy Information

Published reviews or evaluations

2.1. Are there any publicly available inquiry, review or evaluation reports that have informed, or are relevant to, the policy to be given effect by this Bill?	YES
<p>Analysing increases in local government costs for Local Government New Zealand, Infometrics, 2024 accessible at: https://d1pepq1a2249p5.cloudfront.net/media/documents/Analysing_increases_in_local_government_costs_LI2BVKU.pdf</p> <p>Local Government Funding and Financing, Productivity Commission 2019, accessible at: https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-05/pc-inq-lgff-final-report-local-government-funding-and-financing.pdf</p> <p>Te Ara Ahunga Ora Review of Retirement Income Policies 2022, Retirement Commission, 2022, accessible at https://assets.retirement.govt.nz/public/Uploads/Retirement-Income-Policy-Review/2022-RRIP/RRIP_2022.pdf</p>	

Relevant international treaties

2.2. Does this Bill seek to give effect to New Zealand action in relation to an international treaty?	NO
2.2.1. If so, was a National Interest Analysis report prepared to inform a Parliamentary examination of the proposed New Zealand action in relation to the treaty?	NO

Regulatory impact analysis

2.3. Were any regulatory impact statements provided to inform the policy decisions that led to this Bill?	YES
<p>Regulatory Impact Statement: Rates Rebate (Increase for SuperGold Cardholders) Amendment Bill", Department of Internal Affairs 6 May 2025. https://www.dia.govt.nz/resource-material-regulatory-impact-statements-index</p>	
2.3.1. If so, did the RIA Team in the Treasury provide an independent opinion on the quality of any of these regulatory impact statements?	NO
<p>No independent opinion was given because the RIS did not meet the threshold for RIA Team assessment.</p>	
2.3.2. Are there aspects of the policy to be given effect by this Bill that were not addressed by, or that now vary materially from, the policy options analysed in these regulatory impact statements?	NO

Extent of impact analysis available

2.4. Has further impact analysis become available for any aspects of the policy to be given effect by this Bill?	NO
N/A	

2.5. For the policy to be given effect by this Bill, is there analysis available on:	
(a) the size of the potential costs and benefits?	NO
(b) the potential for any group of persons to suffer a substantial unavoidable loss of income or wealth?	NO

2.6. For the policy to be given effect by this Bill, are the potential costs or benefits likely to be impacted by:	
(a) the level of effective compliance or non-compliance with applicable obligations or standards?	NO
(b) the nature and level of regulator effort put into encouraging or securing compliance?	NO

Part Three: Testing of Legislative Content

Consistency with New Zealand's international obligations

3.1. What steps have been taken to determine whether the policy to be given effect by this Bill is consistent with New Zealand's international obligations?

The Bill deals only with domestic matters.

Consistency with the government's Treaty of Waitangi obligations

3.2. What steps have been taken to determine whether the policy to be given effect by this Bill is consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi?

No specific issues were identified in the Bill that may have implications for the rights and interests of Māori protected by the Treaty of Waitangi. As such, no formal steps have been taken to determine whether the policies to be given effect by this Bill are consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Consistency with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990

3.3. Has advice been provided to the Attorney-General on whether any provisions of this Bill appear to limit any of the rights and freedoms affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990?

YES

The advice provided to the Attorney-General by the Ministry of Justice, or a section 7 report by the Attorney-General, is generally expected to be available on the Ministry of Justice website upon introduction of a Bill and such advice, or reports, will be accessible on the Ministry website at <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/constitutional-issues-and-human-rights/the-bill-of-rights-act/compliance-reports/>

Offences, penalties and court jurisdictions

3.4. Does this Bill create, amend, or remove:

(a) offences or penalties (including infringement offences or penalties and civil pecuniary penalty regimes)?

NO

(b) the jurisdiction of a court or tribunal (including rights to judicial review or rights of appeal)?

NO

3.4.1. Was the Ministry of Justice consulted about these provisions?

NO

N/A.

Privacy issues

3.5. Does this Bill create, amend or remove any provisions relating to the collection, storage, access to, correction of, use or disclosure of personal information?

NO

3.5.1. Was the Privacy Commissioner consulted about these provisions?

NO

External consultation

3.6. Has there been any external consultation on the policy to be given effect by this Bill, or on a draft of this Bill?	NO
<p>No external consultation has occurred on the policy to be given effect by the Bill or on a draft of this Bill.</p> <p>The Bill is giving effect to decisions made through Budget 2025. Due to Budget sensitivities this has meant that there has been no opportunity for external engagement between when decisions were confirmed, and implementation.</p>	

Other testing of proposals

3.7. Have the policy details to be given effect by this Bill been otherwise tested or assessed in any way to ensure the Bill's provisions are workable and complete?	YES
<p>Officials from the Department have met separately with the following councils to discuss the impacts of a proposed system change, without advising them of the specific nature of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Auckland Council;b. Christchurch City Council;c. Tauranga City Council;d. Manawatū District Council; ande. Clutha District Council. <p>Questions were put to those councils about the implementation issues they may face, and this has informed how the Department has described risks within the Regulatory Impact statement.</p>	

Part Four: Significant Legislative Features

Compulsory acquisition of private property

4.1. Does this Bill contain any provisions that could result in the compulsory acquisition of private property?	NO
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Charges in the nature of a tax

4.2. Does this Bill create or amend a power to impose a fee, levy or charge in the nature of a tax?	NO
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Retrospective effect

4.3. Does this Bill affect rights, freedoms, or impose obligations, retrospectively?	NO
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Strict liability or reversal of the usual burden of proof for offences

4.4. Does this Bill:	
(a) create or amend a strict or absolute liability offence?	NO
(b) reverse or modify the usual burden of proof for an offence or a civil pecuniary penalty proceeding?	NO

Civil or criminal immunity

4.5. Does this Bill create or amend a civil or criminal immunity for any person?	NO
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Significant decision-making powers

4.6. Does this Bill create or amend a decision-making power to make a determination about a person's rights, obligations, or interests protected or recognised by law, and that could have a significant impact on those rights, obligations, or interests?	NO
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Powers to make delegated legislation

4.7. Does this Bill create or amend a power to make delegated legislation that could amend an Act, define the meaning of a term in an Act, or grant an exemption from an Act or delegated legislation?	YES
<i>The Bill extends the existing power in section 3(2) of the Act to the new income abatement threshold, permitting Orders in Council to be made to amend the figure. This amendment to the existing power is necessary to treat the two income abatement thresholds consistently in the future. The power is constrained in a way consistent with the rest of that section.</i>	

4.8. Does this Bill create or amend any other powers to make delegated legislation?	NO
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Any other unusual provisions or features

4.9. Does this Bill contain any provisions (other than those noted above) that are unusual or call for special comment?	NO
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