

Auckland Indicative Central Government Work Programme



1 January 2026-31 December 2026

Scope for inclusion:

- › Initiatives planned to be initiated over the period 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026
- › Initiatives with a clear Auckland component and that specifically reference Auckland (i.e. excludes national programmes that are significant for Auckland only because of the city’s disproportionate size and scale)
- › Significant central government initiatives - as a general guide this could include initiatives requiring a Cabinet decision or where government has released a media announcement.

Government’s overarching Goals:

1. Build a stronger, more productive economy that lifts real incomes and increases opportunities for New Zealanders.
2. Deliver more efficient, effective and responsive public services to all who need and use them - in particular, to restore law and order and improve health outcomes and educational achievement.
3. Get the government’s books back in order and restore discipline to public spending.

Table 1: Infrastructure and Economic Growth

Infrastructure and Economic Growth						
PORTFOLIO	INITIATIVE	GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE	ALIGNMENT WITH GOALS*	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS	NOTES
Economic Growth	Major Events planning progressed for: › New Zealand Sail Grand Prix 2026 › Auckland Wooden Boat Festival › Auckland UNESCO City of Music Cluster › Linkin Park 2026 › 2026 New Zealand Track and Field Championship › & Juliet › FIFA World Series 2026 › Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki › FIH Nations Cup (pending successful host bid) › Forever Tomorrow: Chinese Art Now exhibition › New Zealand Fashion Week › DIBF World 3x3 Cup › State of Origin 2027 › ASB Polyfest 2026-2027 › The Ocean Race 2027 › Women’s British Irish Lions 2027 (multi-city event) Work progressing: Bid prospects and Events Attraction Package content to secure new major events content, some of which will be hosted in Auckland.	Mix of national (incl Auckland) and Auckland based events	1	MBIE	Delivery planning for confirmed upcoming major events. Ongoing prospect work to secure new major events which would see content hosted in Auckland. Two one-off funds established – Events Boost Fund and Events Attraction Package which are supporting Auckland based events as per Initiative column.	

Infrastructure and Economic Growth						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Ethnic Communities	Ethnic Business Councils Alliance - MEC is working towards launching an alliance of Ethnic Business Councils and organisations, to support them, to contribute to the overall economic growth of New Zealand.	National	1	MEC	In Progress. 1st meeting planned for 21 May 2025.	
	Governance Workshops - Supporting ethnic community leaders to build their understanding of Crown entities and position themselves for future board opportunities. Series of three workshops, starting with Auckland.	Auckland	1	MEC	Planned for 31 March 2025.	
Foreign Affairs and Trade	Confidential advice to Government					
	Auckland Trade and Economic Policy School (ATEPS) – Conference for trade policy discussions between government, academia, and the business community.	Auckland	1	MFAT	Scheduled for 3 September.	2026 theme to be confirmed.
Housing	Confidential advice to Government					
	Homelessness response – 300 additional social housing places.	National	1	HUD	Auckland allocated 207 Housing First places. HUD contracting with existing Housing First providers.	Total funding of \$7M across 4 centres, Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch to allow providers to access redirects through available private market rentals.
	Homelessness response – additional funding for support services.	National	1	HUD	HUD contracting \$5M in-place services for providers.	Funding initiatives: › Housing Assistance Centres › Immediate Access housing › Youth mobile service.

Infrastructure and Economic Growth						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Local Government	Local Water Done Well - to address New Zealand’s longstanding water infrastructure challenges, while recognising the importance of local decision making and ensuring economic, environmental and water quality regulatory requirements are met.	National	2	DIA	Auckland Council will deliver stormwater services as outlined in their water services delivery plan including planned capital expenditure in line with the Council’s 2024 – 2034 Long-Term Plan and the subsequent revisions included in the Annual Plan for FY2025.	
	Watercare Charter – provides for an interim economic regulation regime to support the financial separation of Watercare from Auckland Council. The Charter is made under the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024.	Auckland	2	DIA	The price-quality path set out in the Watercare Charter applies from 1 July 2025 and will ensure the average consumer bill will not increase by more than 7.2% each year for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 years. Watercare is required to prepare a cost efficiency improvement plan, an infrastructure delivery and asset management improvement plan, and a review and redesign of infrastructure growth charges during the 2025/26 year.	
	City and Regional Deals – progression of a Deal.	Regional	1	DIA	The Auckland Deal negotiations were completed in February 2026, and the 10 April is scheduled for the Deal to be signed (by the Prime Minister, Ministers Bishop, Watts and Brown and the Mayor of Auckland). Governance arrangements will be in place no later than 30 days after the signing of the Deal, and Implementation Plans within 6 months.	The proposed Western Bay of Plenty Deal is scheduled to go to Cabinet end of April 2026 and signed later in May. The Otago Central Lakes region deal requires further negotiation and is planned to go to Cabinet in May/June 2026. Both these Deals will also require Governance Arrangements (30 days after signing) and Implementation Plans (six months after signing) completed. Advice on Phase 2 of CRDs is being discussed with Ministers in April 2026 with work on the next set of Deals to commence once Ministers have made decisions. The CRD team will move with the DIA Local Government unit to MCERT from 1 July 2026.
Science, Innovation and Technology	New Zealand Institute of Advanced Technology - Establishment of the hub of the new Institute in Auckland, managing an investment of \$230 million over 4 years to: › Invest in science and technology that supports industries with the potential to shape New Zealand’s future › Develop skills and grow expertise in new and promising technologies › Help boost New Zealand’s economy by innovating and commercialising new technologies into real-world businesses and products.	Auckland	1	MBIE	NZIAT is moving from being in an MBIE-led establishment phase to being a Crown entity company, including: › The company was incorporated on 12 January 2026 › In February 2026, Cabinet approved Orders in Council that will mean from 20 March NZIAT is a Crown entity company › The Board and interim Chief Executive have been appointed. › Recruitment is underway for NZIAT Chair. Location decisions are yet to be taken	
Transport	Time of Use Charging - this will improve traffic flows and shorten journey times by charging road users at certain times or locations, depending on how busy the roads are.	National	1	MoT/ NZTA/ Auckland Council	The Land Transport Management (Time of Use Charging) Amendment Bill will come into force in November 2026. After this, local authorities can make a ‘Scheme Initiation’ decision, which activates the formal ‘Scheme Board’ process with NZTA.	In order to achieve Ministerial approval of a scheme in this local government term, Auckland Council is working jointly with NZTA to enable an Auckland Council Scheme Initiation decision in December 2026. Confidential advice to Government
	Local Government (Auckland Council) (Transport Governance) Amendment Bill - aims to increase democratic accountability for local transport decisions by returning most transport functions to Auckland Council, and strengthen the role of Government and Auckland Council in long-term transport planning through the establishment of the Auckland Regional Transport Committee (ARTC) and development of a 30-year transport plan for Auckland.	Auckland	1	MoT	In March 2025, the Local Government (Auckland Council) (Transport Governance) Amendment Bill (the Bill) was reported back to the House from Select Committee and passed its Second Reading. The Bill is expected to be enacted in April or May 2026.	The Bill provides for a six-month transition period, with statutory processes to guide transition to the new arrangements. The Bill also requires that the ARTC be appointed within three months of enactment.

Infrastructure and Economic Growth						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Transport	Mill Road - a 21.5km corridor from Manukau to south of Drury, going through Alfriston, Takanini and Papakura, to support the movement of people and freight. Stage One connects Manukau and Takāanini between SH1 and Phillip Road.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Early works on Stage 1 (Manukau to Alfriston) are expected to begin in mid-2026. Main construction is expected to begin in mid-2027, subject to obtaining the required approvals.	
	O Mahurangi – Penlink - a new 7km highway between Whangaparāoa Road and SH1 that will reduce travel times and create a more resilient roading network for communities across Whangaparāoa, Hibiscus Coast and Silverdale.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Construction remains underway and is on track for completion in 2029.	
	East-West Link - a new road that aims to improve east-west connectivity, particularly for freight to Auckland’s industrial belt (Onehunga / Penrose/ Mt Wellington / East Tamaki) between SH1 and SH20.	Auckland	1	NZTA	2026 will involve design work to develop, refine and route protect the preferred (revised) corridor, whilst investigating ways to stage sections of the project with a focus on Stage 1, the Galway Link.	
	Northwest Alternative Highway - a new route extending the existing Northwestern Motorway from Brigham Creek Road to SH16 east of Waimauku, supporting the upgrade of the current state highway in Kumeū-Huapai town centre.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Route protection is expected to be completed in June 2026.	
	State Highway 1 Papakura to Drury - upgrades to SH1 between Papakura and Drury Interchanges (in two parts). The first part, around the Papakura Interchange, was completed in 2024.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Construction of Stage 1B (which extends the highway past the Drury Interchange) is underway and due for completion in 2030. The old Chorus Exchange Centre, the Bremner Road Bridge and the Ngakooraoa Bridge were demolished in early 2026 (as scheduled) Enabling works for the new bridge and retaining wall began in March 2026, with the main bridge construction expected to start in 2027.	
	Waihoehoe Rd (Drury Upgrade) - the Waihoehoe Road upgrade project is located between the intersections of Waihoehoe Rd/ Great South Road and Waihoehoe Road/Kath Henry Lane. The improvements will provide access to the planned Drury East housing development area and Drury Railway Station to support long-term growth in the region.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Main construction works are expected to begin in late March or early April 2026.	
	City Rail Link - the largest and most complex infrastructure project delivered in New Zealand to date. When completed, the project will enable the Auckland rail network to at least double its capacity over time and significantly improve journey times for Aucklanders.	Auckland	1	MoT, KiwiRail, Auckland Council, Auckland Transport	The CRL is expected to open in the second half of 2026, although a specific date is yet to be confirmed. Around 16,000 system tests will be completed before Day 1 operations, covering everything from signalling and train control to station ventilation, fire systems, communications, and platform equipment. Testing and integration of these systems is well advanced, with the final phases now focused on verifying that all systems operate together safely and reliably.	KiwiRail is undertaking various additional network upgrades, including changes to Henderson Station, to support increased passenger train frequency. Much of the wider network upgrade work is complete with the rest on target to be completed by mid-2026.
	Level Crossing Removal Programme - Auckland Transport, KiwiRail and NZTA are working to remove all remaining level crossings in Auckland over the next 10 to 30 years. Before the CRL opens, eight pedestrian level crossings and one road level crossing will be removed.	Auckland	1	KiwiRail, NZTA, Auckland Transport	Auckland Transport is constructing three new station bridges in Takanini and Glen Innes to replace level crossings with completion expected mid-2026. Concept design and property acquisition are progressing to enable construction in 2027 of three new grade-separated roads and up to three new pedestrian bridges.	Day 1 CRL level crossing removals are complete, with eight pedestrian level crossings and one road level crossing removed. Work is underway on the investment case to replace or remove the remaining 21 Western Line level crossings.
	Drury Railway Stations - the development of three new rail stations located at Drury, Paerātā, and Ngākōroa including park and ride facilities, cycle parking and car, bus, pedestrian, and cycle access.	Auckland	1	KiwiRail	Drury Railway Station and Paerātā Railway Station are both expected to be operational in mid-2026. A legal challenge in the early stages of the Ngākōroa Railway Station project delayed design and building, meaning it will become operational in 2027.	Rail closures are coming up in the September school holidays from 20 September to 5 October 2025. A closure is also likely in the Christmas period.

Infrastructure and Economic Growth						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Transport	Northwest Busway - an 18km busway along SH16 between Brigham Creek in Northwest Auckland and the city centre.	Auckland	1	NZTA	Construction of the Westgate Station is expected to be completed in August 2026, with bus services expected to commence in September 2026.	
	Waitematā Harbour Connections - progressing further investigations into a bridge or tunnel option, for an additional Waitematā Harbour crossing.	Auckland	1	MoT, NZTA	The investment case is expected to be presented to the NZTA Board in May 2026, Negotiations	
	Bus driver safety - a safety screen programme to install bus driver safety screens on 80% of bus fleet by June 2026, live CCTV trial on 30 buses, and installation of various driver toilets and rest facilities.	Auckland	1	NZTA, Auckland Transport	Driver safety screens are expected to be installed by June 2026. Auckland Transport are expected to report on the CCTV trial in April 2026.	
	Eastern Busway – a busway from Pakūranga to Botany that will make local trips easier and more efficient by providing better connections and travel options. It will also create a reliable bus and train service between Botany and Waitematā Station (Britomart), an important part of the region’s rapid transport network.	Auckland	1	Auckland Transport	Following funding approval for the final stage of the Eastern Busway, works will start in March 2026 to connect the busway to Botany Town Centre. This is expected to be completed in mid-2027. Upgrades will also be carried out on various intersections, underground utility upgrades along Ti Rakau Drive and completion of station structures.	The Eastern Busway is set to open in 2027, extending the current Panmure–Pakūranga busway all the way to Botany Town Centre. A period of operational readiness (testing) will begin in late 2026 ahead of opening in 2027.
Small Business and Manufacturing	The Government is expanding the Digital Manufacturing Light (DM Light) programme , following a successful pilot delivered by the University of Auckland.	Initial rollout regions include: › Auckland › Waikato › Northland › Bay of Plenty	1	MBIE	The programme is designed to deploy technology but also build long term digital capability inside firms. It focuses on: › Low cost, off the shelf technologies › Open-source software › Minimal disruption to existing operations › Hands on installation and workforce training.	Launched in February, this is a three-year funding package of up to \$475,000 per year has been committed to support the expansion. The programme will support at least 180 small and medium sized manufacturers.

Table 2: Social

Social						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Health	Health & Education (HeEd) Collaborative - Health NZ and Ministry of Education representatives and stakeholders from across the Northern Region/Auckland are brought together to collaborate on improving outcomes for tamariki and engagement with learning.	Regional	2	Health NZ	› Deliver 8 HeEd hui › Provide 16 jointly presented health & education webinars ECE & school attendance & engagement › Provide 4 HeEd Panui to all schools & ECEs in the northern region › Continue to support STAR (attendance framework) › Complete a review of nurse services in primary & intermediate schools › Design a consistent universal health service offering in primary and intermediate schools in the Northern region	Note - Tailored approaches between Tai Tokerau and Auckland responses.
	Urgent and after hours care clinic - 24/7 urgent and after hours care clinic in South Auckland through a tender process.	Auckland	2	Health NZ	Continued operation of the 24/7 urgent care Local Doctors Otara from 19 January 2026. East Care Urgent Care Clinic extended to 1am from 1 March 2026. Telehealth available 24/7 through multiple providers.	South & East Auckland.
	Healthy Families NZ – a large-scale prevention initiative that is community-led and takes a systems approach to preventing chronic disease. A key focus on creating health promoting environments that increase physical activity, improve access to healthy food, reduce alcohol-related harm, address the negative impacts of smoking and improve mental wellbeing.	National	2	Health NZ	Ongoing work continues in the three areas. Current contracts with lead providers end in June 2027.	There are 10 Healthy Families NZ locations. Of the 11 lead providers, three are in Auckland (Waitakere – led by Sport Waitākere and two in South Auckland – one led by Auckland Council and the other by The Cause Collective).

Health	Provide timely access to the Peer workforce working in the Te Toka Tumai ED & North Shore Hospital ED - improving the pathway and flow through ED for those presenting with mental distress.	Auckland	2	Health NZ	Ongoing provision of the peer support specialist service at Auckland City Hospital and North Shore Hospital Emergency Departments.	
	Healthy Mother Healthy Future – Asian Perinatal Wellbeing Programme: A mental health & wellbeing programme designed for Asian pregnant women and mothers with infants (up to 1 year old) to improve perinatal health outcomes by reducing psychological risks through culturally appropriate advice and support.	Auckland	2	Health NZ	Ongoing delivery of services (mental health and wellbeing) to Asian pregnant women across Auckland. These include: › Family support group › Peer support – cultural/language appropriate › Psycho education workshop for tangata/family › More mental health-related training for the Asian workforce.	
	Mental Health – Integrated Primary Mental Health Services for Asian People.	Auckland	2	Health NZ	Asian Family Services has commenced offering integrated Primary Mental Health Services through highly accessed General Practices.	
	Mental Health – Outreach Mental Health Nurse.	Auckland	2	Health NZ	Continued operation of Mental Health Nurse through the Auckland City Mission Outreach team to support rough sleepers.	
	Alo Vaka –supporting Pacific people on Jobseeker Support to move off benefit and into meaningful and sustainable employment.	National	1	MSD	The Alo Vaka programme transferred from MBIE to MSD on 1 January 2026 and has been re-designed. › Providers work with participants to actively identify and address barriers unique to Pacific people and their communities through culturally responsive support. › There are currently six providers across the country, with two in Auckland region. › Initial contracts end on 30 June 2027.	MSD will gather evidence to inform a wider, competitive open-tender procurement process with new contracts in place from 1 July 2027.
Police	National Property Review	National & Auckland	2	Police		Full review of polices property footprint with a 20-year view factoring in population growth.
	Cyber Crime Team	National & Auckland	2	Police		Creation of a national cyber crime team. 15 positions nationally with the likely impact being half the team Auckland based.
	Retail Crime Focus	National & Auckland	2	Police		Police will be focusing this calendar year on lifting retail crime resolutions by 15%.
Social Development	Whānau Ora	National and Regional	2	Te Puni Kokiri	4 x Commissioning Agencies (CA's) contracted. 169 providers and 700 navigators in place and working.	2 Commissioning Agencies, 44 providers and 34 navigators impact in Auckland. CA's have outcomes agreements. Data goes straight into the IDI.
	Stand up of Franklin Workforce Programme - to provide strategic oversight, coordination, and accountability for the workforce response to the long term pipeline of large-scale developments in Franklin (and South Auckland) ensuring alignment across government, education, and industry.	Auckland	1	MBIE, MSD	Scope and define the makeup of work streams & the agency and private sector membership of groups that will deliver an action plan under the umbrella of the Franklin Workforce Programme	3 Elements of Local Workforce Architecture to be implemented in 2026 to start delivering FWP: › Franklin Workforce Governance Group (Strategic Oversight) › Franklin Education Steering Group (Skills and Training Pipeline) › Industry and Employer Steering Group (Workforce Supply / Demand Pipeline)

Table 3: Cultural

Cultural						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Arts, Culture & Heritage	Polyfest Pasifika - began in 1976 and is one of the largest festivals in the world that represents pacific culture.	Auckland	2	Education (schools)		Held annually. › 18 – 21 March 2026 – Pasifika and Diversity Stage @ Manukau Sports Bowl › 30 March – 02 April 2026 – Māori Stage @ Due Drop Event Centre.
	St James - Crown and Auckland Council partnership to structurally strengthen the theatre and upgrade its essential services.	Auckland	1	MCH	Site Establishment + Early Works continue First building consent for structural work will be lodged in February. Strengthening will take place from the exterior, which is more efficient as it will not impact any significant interior finishes.	› Project remains within its allocated budget envelope. Council QS has been engaged to provide budget reviews at regular intervals. › Two Project Steering Group meetings are scheduled during the period (February and May 2026). › Discussions with the Recipient are still underway to confirm a strategy for the Theatre’s Queen Street appearance. › Electrical mains work is substantially complete.
	Coates Memorial Church, Matakoho - maintenance project on a national memorial.	Regional	1	MCH	Work fully completed to enhance and preserve the Church.	The aim of the project was to enhance the and preserve the condition of the Coates Memorial Church through a comprehensive programme of maintenance tasks.
	Matariki – National Hautapu-ā-Motu – Iwi and Crown partnership to host the national Matariki celebration.	National	1	MCH	The Hautapu-ā-Motu will be delivered in Auckland and broadcast to the nation on 10 July 2026. Planning and full delivery of this event will be undertaken.	The national broadcast will help showcase the wider Auckland region and what makes the Māori New Year unique for the area.

Table 4: Environmental and Conservation

Environmental and Conservation						
Portfolio	Initiative	Geographic Scope	Alignment with Goals*	Lead Agency	Status	Notes
Conservation	International Visitor Levy - Auckland visitor sites.	National	2	DOC	A number of further infrastructure upgrades and weed control projects were announced in late 2025 for delivery over 2026.	New projects: multiple island sewerage systems, Rangitoto summit track, Mansion House (Kawau) drainage, Motuihe and Tiritiri Matangi wharves, multi-island weed control Existing are: Goat Island Marine Reserve, Rangitoto and Motutapu.