

18 May 2022

Personal details removed for proactive release

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18–901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

OIA 27987

Tēnā koe ^{Personal details removed for proactive release}

I refer to your email of 1 April 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

... I request a copy of the report the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research was commissioned to provide the Ministry on the quality of its policy advice, completed in September 2021.

Where the information is withheld, I request you provide the title and date of the communication/document withheld, the reason for refusal and the grounds in support of that reasons as required by section 19(a)(i) and (ii) of the Official Information Act.

On 4 May 2022, due to further consultation being required before a response could be provided, the timeframe for responding to your request was extended by 10 working days, to 18 May 2022. Thank you for your patience while this process was concluded.

The information relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 6(b)(ii): to protect the passing of information from an international organisation on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments;
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) and enclosed documents on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

September 2021

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About NZIER

NZIER is a specialist consulting firm that uses applied economic research and analysis to provide a wide range of strategic advice to clients in the public and private sectors throughout New Zealand and Australia, and further afield.

NZIER has been reviewing the quality of policy advice for central and local government for more than 15 years, using an evolving framework. We now use the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Policy Quality Framework for those reviews.

These reviews are the basis of NZIER's wider offerings supporting central and local government agencies seeking to improve the quality of their advice. Our capability extends from deep dives reviewing individual projects to group or individual training and mentoring.

We aim to be the premier centre of applied economic research in New Zealand. We pride ourselves on our reputation for independence and delivering quality analysis in the right form, and at the right time, for our clients. We ensure quality through teamwork on individual projects, critical review at internal seminars, and peer review at various stages through a project by a senior staff member otherwise not involved in the project.

Each year NZIER devotes resources to undertake and make freely available economic research and thinking aimed at promoting a better understanding of New Zealand's important economic challenges.

NZIER was established in 1958.

Authorship

This paper was prepared at NZIER by John Yeabsley, Cathy Scott, Todd Kriebel and Derek Gill.

The assistance of Sarah Spring is gratefully acknowledged.

Registered office: Level 13, Public Trust Tower, 22–28 Willeston St | PO Box 3479, Wellington 6140
Auckland office: Ground Floor, 70 Shortland St, Auckland
Tel 0800 220 090 or +64 4 472 1880 | econ@nzier.org.nz | www.nzier.org.nz

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1 Key points

Your score this year was identical to last year. But the distribution was slightly different – being more tightly clustered as shown in a lower standard deviation.

It was a **complete result in meeting standards** with 100% achievement this year up on last year's 95%. And another **improvement in the proportion of papers that exceed the standard** – up to 70% from 68%.

Overall, this is another great result. All papers are doing the job, and more than two-thirds are doing it well. We know it takes hard work to maintain high levels of quality. You'll need to keep at it.

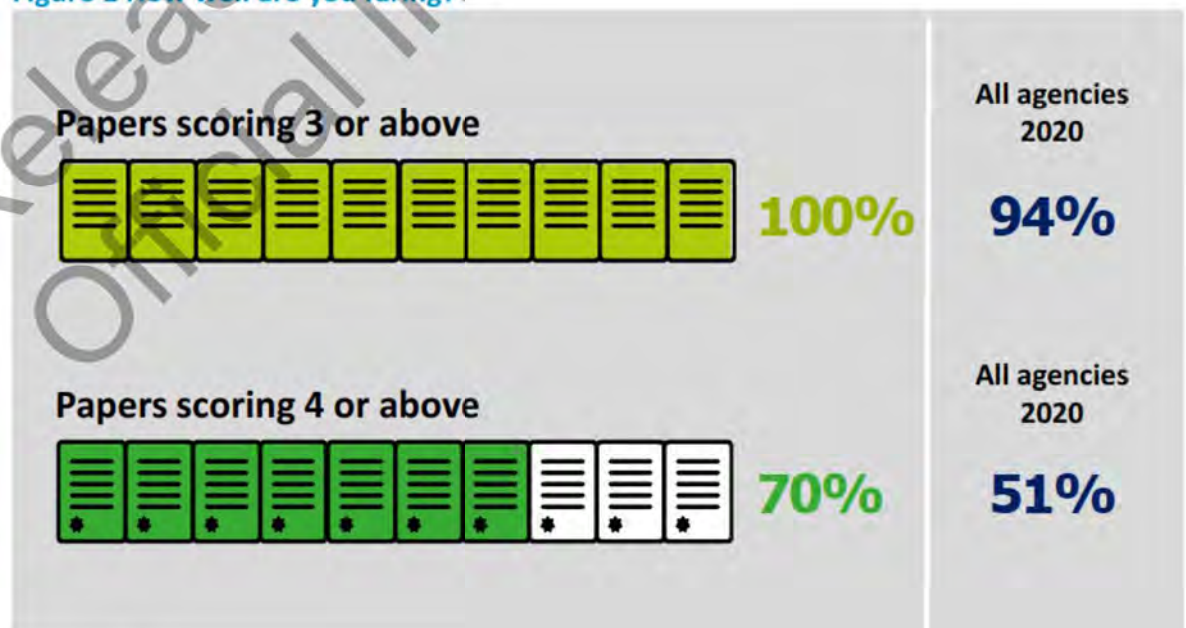
We continue to be impressed

Your strengths in the short sharp papers that tell a story briefly but effectively continued. The ability to communicate complex situations in a few words without losing any of the delicate aspects of the circumstances is crucial in many of your roles.

Three papers scored a 5. These high-scorers are all samples of best practice. As worked examples, they are potentially management aides; you might think about circulating them or posting them on your intranet for authors of papers to consult.

This was not an easy year – despite the experience of 2020. Difficulties continued to crop up and had to be addressed and surmounted. You even had to cope with a new Minister in the lead role. We were struck by your strong house style coming to the fore. We saw top-drawer tactical and professional advice. The results testify to the success you had in keeping on keeping on.

Figure 1 How well are you faring?



Source: NZIER



2 We recommend that you

There were many aspects of the sample we rated highly. The provision of talking points, including 'hip pocket' (just in case) material, was great. Your insights and overviews continue to reflect high standards. And we noted some striking visuals with useful diagrams and the odd A3 breaking up the text in several pieces. But there is always room for improvement, and we note that the issues we have been talking about over the last few years keep surfacing.

So, while knowing you are continuing to stress the earlier advice we propose:

2.1 Keep going at it, but pick up some quick wins

The previous advice included:

- **Doing more systematic options analysis.** We see this as a critical matter of providing your Minister with a clear rationale for the suggested action or attitude through the logic of showing how it is superior to all other alternatives. We like the formal examination of the identified options against criteria but a brief reference to why the recommended option is preferred is always helpful.
- **Continuing to improve presentation.** You have been creative with the use of the short memo. But there are many other useful devices that could become part of the standard MFAT kitbag of presentation aids:
 - Timelines – these can help untangle the way complicated situations have evolved.
 - Maps – can make all the difference to understanding a problem – especially if tailored to the topic, so the specific location under discussion shows out clearly.
 - Charts and graphs – when well-chosen to present the data and material to best effect, these can live up to their reputation of being worth a thousand words.

But all these devices need to be subjected to the same test: can the point be appreciated without it being explained at length in accompanying text? If the meaning does not jump out almost at first glance, the device is not helping. A useful approach is to think about keeping it as simple as possible. Remove everything that is not necessary to the idea being communicated.

Beyond these 'work ons', we see some easy and hopefully quick improvements by addressing potential irritants to your readers through:

- **Cutting out the large numbers of noting recommendations** in advice to your own Ministers. The Cabinet Office rules reduce the room to manoeuvre in Cabinet Papers, but in briefing your own, you can ensure the papers are crisp and to the point without duplication.
- **Ensuring that there is an appropriate signature block for each other Minister** to show their approval if the paper is referred to them for concurrence. Many of your papers reflected current practice by entailing decisions to be made by groups of Ministers with the power to act. So, the paper was referred across. But the only Minister with space to sign was yours. Including a signature space (and potentially



on each recommendation requiring agreement) for all the Ministers who need to agree is simple but helpful.

- **Review your use of headings.** We see best practice as involving active headings and subheadings. When done well, the headings should form a sort of quick summary of the way the paper's argument flows. In other words, avoid standard and thus unhelpful words like 'comment' and move to tailored phrases describing just what the relevant section says.¹

2.2 Backing your analysis and key insights with data and examples²

We have been hammering away at this topic for several years, but it continues to be a weakness. We see New Zealand political debate as largely pragmatic. It may involve matters of high theory like equity or long-standing differences of opinion like how far the state should reach into the lives of citizens. But the shape of the arguments will tend to be built around examples and based on evidence, usually with the support of data.

Examples make the discussion real...

So what we recommend you do is find ways of always grounding your high-level discussions in examples. This might entail looking at your paper approval system to ensure the sign out process is not completed unless the question, "What is involved here – what would be one of these?" is answered in the paper.

Good practice is to attach an annex with a short 'worked example' to any paper that discusses matters at a high level. The attachment is a chance to (briefly) show what the general case translates into at a practical level.

...while evidence makes the claims and proposals credible

More widely, we saw too many claims made without supporting evidence. As the Masterclass makes clear, there are various forms of support that can be used to make a claim credible. Best practice is to make use of whatever lies to hand for the issue of concern.

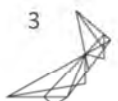
But the key to making supporting evidence work for the Minister is to ensure whatever source is being drawn on is 'rated.' Its content must be supplemented by an assessment of the quality of the material. If possible, some sort of risk evaluation is best. But a 'health warning' which discusses the reliability of the source is crucial.

We discussed the use of data and evidence in our 2019 review and saw some favourable results last year. In particular, in last year's sample a number of papers provided a thoughtful assessment of the impacts of policy for Māori, and Māori businesses in particular. These were based on some solid evidence of the nature of these businesses, and how they contributed to the New Zealand economy. This is a great example of the use of specially gathered data and material to provide strong evidence the support advice.

Going beyond that, policy advisors generally draw on the following types of material:

¹ A trick experienced agencies use is to employ the feature in Word that allows the document to be presented a sequence of headings. If this display shows the story unfolding, you are on the way.

² There is a raft of helpful advice in Master class No 20 at https://nzier.org.nz/static/media/filer_public/87/1d/871d9999-4821-4ff5-96fa-ac0c793cac51/brief_20_presenting_evidence.pdf



- **Official statistics³** – including newer data sets like the IDI (Integrated Data Infrastructure).
- **International comparative statistics** – for example, from the OECD or other international organisations.
- **Information from the agencies' own** (typically administrative) data collection systems (and when matched with that of others) – including trends over time.
- **Literature reviews** – picking up previous research findings (including overseas results for comparison).
- **Market research techniques** – including focus groups, surveys of service users.
- **Co-design processes** with service users.
- **Expert advice** – e.g. from engineers, or scientists. This also includes using expert panels to assess all the evidence and draw conclusions.
- **International comparisons** of policy approaches and their outcomes.
- **Comparisons with approaches adopted in other areas** within New Zealand.
- **Modelling** – of various types from straight forward spreadsheet work to elaborate multi-equation models like those involved in general equilibrium research.

This is not a comprehensive list and not all of these are frequently helpful for your tasks. But they provide a checklist to make sure the net is cast widely.

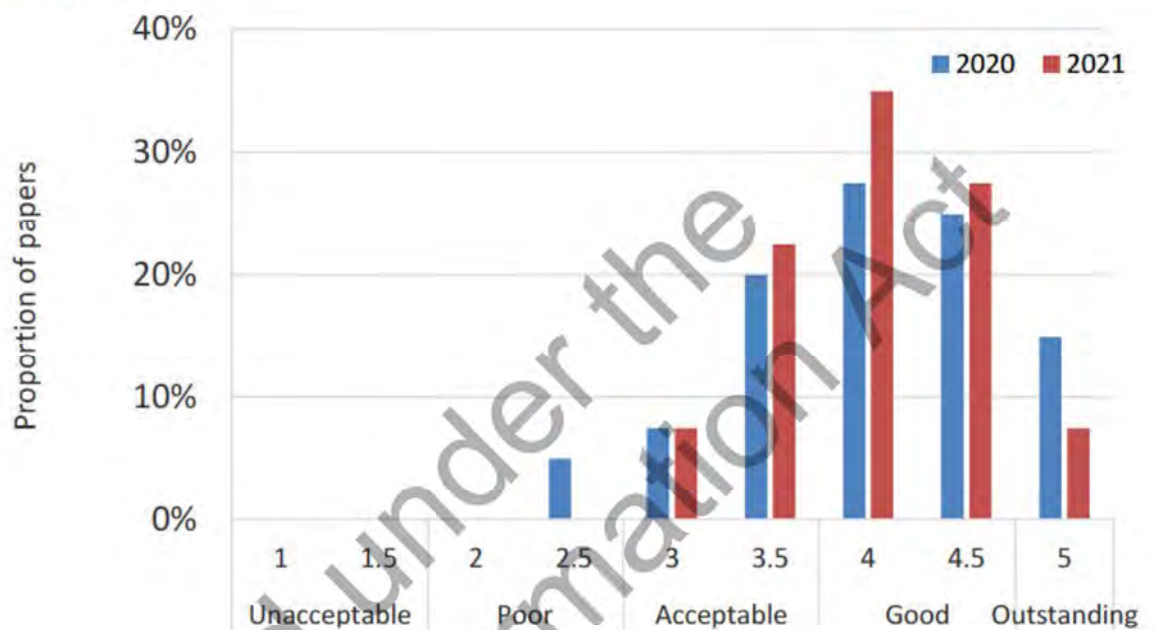
³ Official statistics published by Statistics NZ are always accompanied by a discussion of the research methods and associated risks with the data.

3 Results

3.1 The picture

Figure 2 Distribution of scores

Proportion of papers marked



Source: NZIER

As mentioned above, the distribution of scores is more grouped around the centre this year, though it retains the same median score – 4. The lack of poor papers is offset by the drop in the number of outstanding pieces.

Table 1 Policy paper quality scores⁴

	Number	Mean	Median	Min	Max	St Dev
2020	40	4.03	4.0	2.5	5.0	0.68
2021	40	4.03	4.0	3.0	5.0	0.53

Source: NZIER

⁴ The key statistics in the table summarise our overall impressions:

- The median reflects what the reader can commonly expect.
- The mean includes the impact of the extremes that make lasting impressions.
- The standard deviation indicates the consistency of the papers.



3.2 Historical comparisons

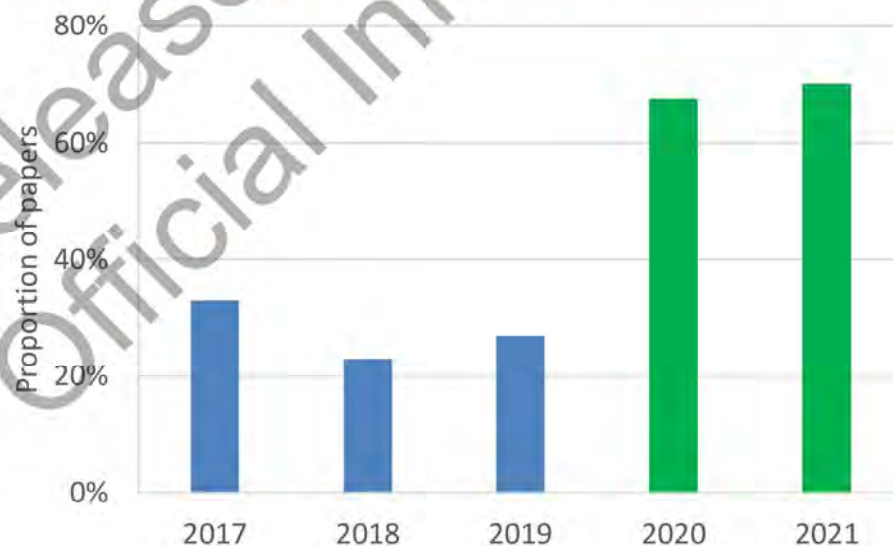
2020 establishes a new baseline, so, as noted, we have limited context for these results. But there is a clear trend showing in the results under the new system. In both the proportion of papers that met the standards and the proportion that exceeded them there is an increase.

Figure 3 Proportion of papers which met the standards

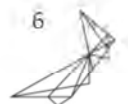


Source: NZIER

Figure 4 Proportion of papers which exceeded the standards



Source: NZIER



3.3 Further advice

We are continuing with the series of Policy Advice Masterclasses in 2021 focused on tips and tricks to help you improve the quality of your advice. You will have no doubt received some of these Masterclasses by now.

Our earlier Masterclasses, developed over the past four years, are published on our website⁵ so that you can access them easily.

In November/December, we will be holding our annual event to discuss emerging trends, plusses and minuses of papers overall, performance against the new criteria, and other issues we see in the reviews. We will also award prizes for the best papers.

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⁵ <https://nzier.org.nz/quality-of-policy-advice/central-government-masterclasses/>



4 Strengths and weaknesses

4.1 Positives



Context

- **Clear about content** – Readers need early notice about the content of the papers. Virtually all this sample had good titles and purpose statements. It was notable when the intent was unclear.
- **History helps** – most of the advice you were offering was deeply rooted in the way the situation evolved. This gave the history real importance, and most papers delivered – especially in the overview pieces like Papers 1 and 9.



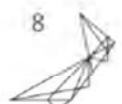
Analysis

- **International legal knowledge is a strength** – often, the existence of and support for international legal structures are helpful for small countries. In several of the examples here, this showed through. (Papers 18, 20, 24 and 27)
- **Varied problems mean varied frameworks** – the sample reviewed cover a diverse set of issues that are being handled. This is reflected in the range of approaches used, from options examination (Paper 12) to careful engagement with human rights (Paper 8).
- **Diplomatic policy trade-offs** – a special case of a framework developed to apply directly in the case of choosing issues where New Zealand might take a stand. This was used, for instance, in Paper 40.



Advice

- **Key points tell a story** – many papers had strong opening sections that took the reader through the crucial ideas. The rest of the paper then provided the detail and extras. This shape works well. (e.g. Papers 11 and 19)
- **Risks are always part of the problem** – all advice is risky. The advisor's task is to make it clear and set out how to think about it to inform the decision-maker. This was not a feature of all papers but was handled well by some. (See papers 18 and 23)



Free and frank – meeting the demands of providing difficult advice is often a challenge but is part of the job. Several of these papers faced the issue and came through well. (Paper 35)

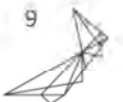
- **Visual effects can transform a paper** – there was scope for the use of many more devices. Where they were employed (Papers 1, 4 and 6), they were often striking and effective.



Action

- **Following the recommendations with a comms plan is sound practice** – when your Minister is advised to make a decision, it is helpful to show how it is going to be made public. (See Papers 14, 22 and 32.)

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4.2 Areas to work on



Context

- **Ministers' knowledge is not something to assume** – many papers assumed a high degree of background information recall by the reader. This is often going to be the case, but not always. It is good practice to ensure all briefs are 'stand alone' – they must provide just enough background to make the paper intelligible, as well as referencing to previous briefings.



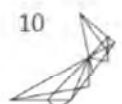
Analysis

- **Problems deserve to be put into their ranking** – this usually means giving some scale or importance to them. With this a reader will automatically rate this issue in the priority list.
- **Public money makes the government go round** – a number of papers lacked a full treatment of the way an allocation of funds was being handled. In particular, the place of the Minister in approving the proposals was hazy when it needed to be sharp. This was raised specifically last year.
- **Impacts for Māori** – last year, we were impressed by papers with thoughtful, evidence-based assessments of the effects of policy for Māori and Māori businesses. This year, aside from the featured discussion in a paper on indigenous people, there were only passing references. More is needed covering all aspects of Māori analysis: impacts on Māori, the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori views.



Advice

- **Text-heavy** – many papers were relentlessly wordy. They would have been an easier read with more (active) headings, visual devices or a strict edit to reduce their size.
- **Data is helpful** – many papers did not have a single number included. Most issues can be sized up and discussed in figures these days, and it is a powerful support to evaluations and assessments.





Action

- **Review and report-back are normal** – most of the papers were reporting or advising on evolving situations. Under these conditions, it's always sensible to say when an update will be coming.

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4.3 A significant number of excellent papers

Three papers scored a 5. These are all examples of best practice. Consider circulating them as model examples or put them on your intranet for future reference.

- Paper 4: *Securing New Zealand's interests in the South China Sea* – succinct joint work provides advice on possible responses to developments in the South China Sea. A full options assessment with careful risk examination results in well-informed recommendations.
- s6(a)
- Paper 38: *Voting Submission: United Nations Security Council for 2022-23 Term* – not only really short but clear about the recommendations and still discusses the risks.

4.4 Progress in implementing last year's recommendations

We've seen some instances of good work in areas we discussed last year, but it was not universal.

Table 2 Progress on recommendations

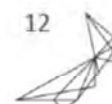
Issue	Progress seen in the 2020 Review	Comments
More systematic options analysis	Some great examples, but not in all papers	Still lightly used. This is an approach as much as a technique. Many papers still had strong suggestions but didn't even acknowledge that other options had been considered. And without alternatives, it's hard to know why the proposal is best.
More use of data and evidence	Some progress made	This is still thin. It needs an effort to make your great insights stronger. Don't forget to comment on the quality and robustness of data and point out any issues or risks. ⁶
Improving presentation	Some great examples, but not in all papers	The short memo papers were great again. They are a real strength. Not only brief but sharp. All Ministers like short advice. But watch the length and think about breaking up the text with active headings.
Intervention Logic	Some progress made	There were several papers where the rationale for the actions or decisions proposed were lacking.

Key:

Done – normal practice now	Limited progress made
Some great examples, but not in all papers	Not addressed
Some progress made	

Source: NZIER

⁶ https://nzier.org.nz/static/media/filer_public/87/1d/871d9999-4821-4ff5-96fa-ac0c793cac51/brief_20_presenting_evidence.pdf



Appendix A The Policy Quality Framework

Figure 5 Policy Quality Framework: standards for quality policy advice



Source: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

The full framework can be found at <https://dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-06/policy-quality-framework-full.pdf>



Appendix B Policy Quality Framework scoring definitions

Score	Meaning	Description
1	Unacceptable	Does not meet the relevant quality standards in fundamental ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks basic information and analysis • Creates serious risk of poor decision-making • Should not have been signed out • Needed fundamental rework
2	Poor	Does not meet the relevant quality standards in material ways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the basic issue but seriously lacking in several important areas • Creates risk of poor decision-making • Should not have been signed out • Needed substantial improvement in important areas
3	Acceptable	Meets the relevant quality standards overall, but with some shortfalls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides most of the analysis and information needed • Could be used for decision-making • Was sufficiently fit-for-purpose for sign-out • Could have been improved in several areas
4	Good	Meets all the relevant quality standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents good practice • Provides a solid basis for decision-making • Could have been signed out with confidence • Minor changes would have added polish
5	Outstanding	Meets all the relevant quality standards and adds something extra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents exemplary practice • First-rate advice that provides a sound basis for confident decision-making • Could have been signed out with great confidence • A polished product



Appendix C One-page assessments

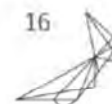
C.1 New Zealand's engagement with the Biden Administration

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>New Minister briefed about new President. A thoughtful set piece of overview note plus a more substantial report. It takes the opportunity to summarise the NZ/US relationship in a diagram, assesses the total picture, and looks at what we might seek in the changed situation. Its judgements seem considered, and the comments are generally grounded. It sets a new Minister up for the future.</p> <p>It would have scored better with more data and more flair in the presentation to make the useful insights stronger and easier to absorb.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Title and Purpose statement signal the intent of this pack.</p> <p>The timing means the reason for it is obvious.</p> <p>A sound strategic overview of the full range of New Zealand interests is the backbone of the forward view here.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>The framework used is to develop a picture of the new regime (and its differences to the previous one) and then looks at the implications and opportunities for building the relationship to further our aims.</p> <p>While straightforward, this is sufficiently robust to organise a mass of thoughtfully selected material into a series of propositions about our priorities.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Many claims are not backed up – it's light on data. Some appendices and/or charts and graphs could relieve the text and provide summary information.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Tidy with only a few minor slips.</p> <p>An easy read despite the high level of information in the content.</p> <p>The overview note's good one page Key Points pulls the basic material into a short sharp summary – and a similar feat of compression is shown in the A3 in the report.</p> <p>Report has nice presentation touches like bolding key words to show the content of each paragraph.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Note is light on active headings – or other devices to help the reader's eye catch the flow of the discussion. While an easy read, adding more signposts and highlighted phrases would give this cover paper extra value. (See the report's presentation.)</p> <p>The report (aside from the A3) is text heavy. Even with a summary and the A3, it needed more presentational devices to make it a varied read.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Sets out the priorities it has derived from the discussion. These are to shape the next set of interactions.</p> <p>Keeps its powder dry. The situation's fluidity is acknowledged. It advises MFAT will stay watching the evolution of the new administration and suggest changes if merited.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.2 APEC 2021: Advancing APEC Work on Climate Change

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Thoughtful briefing to Ministers discussing their role in furthering APEC work on climate change during New Zealand's year of hosting APEC. Useful generic talking points back up good background and sensible suggestions.</p> <p>Would be better with an outline of how we think the proposal here will unfold.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Purpose gives the motive and aim of the paper.</p> <p>Timing is driven by the start of New Zealand's year hosting APEC.</p> <p>Good background on what has led up to this position.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Framework used is to develop a plan built around the commitments in the Putrajaya Vision. This thoughtful idea moves to directly tackle the seeming shift away from a lack of enthusiasm among APEC members for climate change. To nudge them along, individual Ministers are encouraged to lobby their counterparts with ideas relevant to their portfolio areas.</p> <p>This is logical and allows Ministers to work in their own comfort zones. The suggestions are relatively modest but seem sensible and achievable. A long term perspective is taken.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>While the advice is broadly sound and the approach one to follow through, there will come a time when the issues must be discussed in a more detailed way. Some supplementary material to cover the way New Zealand sees the work programme evolving would better set up the Ministers being informed here for the longer game.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Tidy</p> <p>Short.</p> <p>Readable.</p> <p>Great to have generic talking points. This provides the various Ministers with raw material.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Best practice is to provide talking points in ready to read form – especially if they are for a range of users. Then, even if they have to be revised to fit the context, they are more suited to amendment and ready use.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Clear that this material is for use by a range of Ministers as they make APEC contacts.</p>
Areas for improvement	



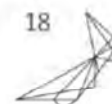
C.3 Progressing Indigenous Inclusion during APEC 2021

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>The submission outlines a proposal to progress two strands of indigenous inclusion in conjunction with our hosting of APEC. It also requests the engagement of the Minister to support the plan. It provides sound tactical advice.</p> <p>Needed a firm edit to remove duplications and awkwardness while inserting more practicality.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Purpose is clear and stated early.</p> <p>Timing comes from the onset of the New Zealand hosting.</p> <p>It makes links to a range of national and international strategies and includes shrewdly designed measures that fit within the APEC context.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>The aim is to cement the work into APEC's ongoing agenda; the approach is to build a proposal on established programmes while fitting it within a 'natural' APEC style. This is cunning and is sound tactical advice.</p> <p>Interaction with Māori helped with partnership and yielded knowledge about their APEC exposure. The findings were used to create the two-phase strategy: inside and alongside APEC. This works well despite no discussion of options – of course, the detail will evolve as it goes along.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>There are many high-level mentions of possible areas, but few have sufficient detail to make them real. What exactly will be the likely outcomes? Is this about participation in meetings and text in announcements, or are there more substantial results?</p> <p>Mentions the existence of possible support countries at para 10 but only names them (we assume) at para 17. This intelligence is great, but the reader wants it earlier.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Tidy apart from a glaring slip in para 28.</p> <p>Conveys the points it intends to make.</p> <p>Some nice touches – like the Māori motif.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Key points are rather high level, and the reader is looking for examples and detail – this carries over into the body despite examples.</p> <p>Rather awkwardly drafted with the treatment of the MFA being treated inconsistently on occasion. Also, the structure of the paper means there are areas of duplication that should have been avoided.</p> <p>Lots of noting recommendations – not good practice.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>The paper is to be circulated to a range of Ministers.</p> <p>Good to see regular reports flagged.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.4 Securing New Zealand's interests in the South China Sea

Overall assessment	
5	<p>s6(a)</p> <p>It crisply looks (including via a useful A3) at a range of possible measures as options and recommends a staged set of actions. This is cool, calm and sensible advice that looks like one agency drafted it.</p> <p>Bolstering the background support to the assurances about the risk discussion would improve the paper still further.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>This paper has its purpose up front.</p> <p>The crucial background material is succinct but well organised. It shows links with wider strategic matters.</p> <p>The shift in the situation has triggered the paper.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Classic public policy analysis. Our interests drive the problem statement, and a series of possible options are developed. There is an explicit evaluation against criteria in the attachment, but the assessment is more implicit in the paper looking at interests balanced against the risks.</p> <p>This is thoughtful and gives Ministers a sound basis on which to decide.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>It is impossible to be completely sure about risk assessments, but it would be a better piece with more reasoning (and possibly evidence from other instances) around the risk judgements here. As it is, the material is sensible but heavily reliant on trust.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Short – eight pages go to whoa.</p> <p>Tidy and a smooth piece of text from three agencies with no seams showing.</p> <p>Great A3 attachment sums up the situation in a few words, displays the territorial waters overlaps on a map and works through the options.</p> <p>Good work to have completed and attached the draft Third Person Note – this shows the level of exposure this rather legalistic device creates.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>It doesn't refer to the valuable A3 attached in the report – a pity, as it is great.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Suggests referring to selected Ministers.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Only reference to monitoring is in the context of providing further advice s6(a)</p>



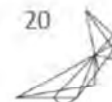
C.5 Australia and New Zealand: Working Together in a COVID-19 World

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>Thoughtful and clear-eyed picture of the importance of Australia in New Zealand's COVID-19 future. This encompasses our (joint) international endeavours and our national interests. Ministers in the new Government are briefed about fostering the relationship via their counterparts.</p> <p>Attaching more detailed examples of New Zealand/Australian Ministers working together – perhaps in an annex would give Ministers more to hold onto.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>This paper is prepared for the new Government in the COVID-19 environment. But its form is structured around the relationship and would be similar even without the pandemic.</p> <p>It provides useful context – particularly on the Australian scene.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>The approach is to review the whole picture at a high level. To do this, it draws on experience s6(a)</p> <p>Clearly stated description of how it works between the two countries: s6(a)</p> <p>The note of pragmatic realism is excellent.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>A few more examples of how the cooperation inside the individual portfolio areas has gone – perhaps in an annex would provide some meat on the bare bones here.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Good writing and well-chosen stance – coverage is generic, with several examples handled in depth. This works very well.</p> <p>Tidy and about the right length.</p> <p>It covers the whole gamut and floats at sufficient height to provide sound advice without getting enmeshed in detail.</p> <p>Well-chosen headings guide the reader.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>A more comprehensive listing of opportunities for Ministers to work with their Australian counterparts would make a great annex. This would show MFAT's strength as a coordinating agent – adding value.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>It promises MFAT will follow up once this has been circulated.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.6 International Climate Change Engagement Plan (ICCEP)

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>Crisp and focused cover sheet briefs Minister on action since previous draft ICCEP and submits the revised version. Wastes no words while summing it all up in a two-sided gatefold with a striking timeline.</p> <p>Would score even higher without so many unreferenced acronyms and abbreviations.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>History is explained.</p> <p>Purpose is clear.</p> <p>Plan has a neat layout to show what links to what.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Framework used is how the rest of the year will unfold in terms of opportunities for agencies and Ministers to further New Zealand's Climate Change aims via the Plan. This works both as a presentation device and as a logic for the elements of the strategy.</p> <p>As a plan, the material is goal-oriented and written around opportunities. It serves as an annotated agenda rather than an instruction book.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>But it would still be useful to have more detail on the sorts of results that are being sought. What kind of outcomes would satisfy the Plan?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>The cover sheet is tight and to the point – nothing but key points. Well done.</p> <p>It says what has unfolded since the previous encounter with this material and looks ahead.</p> <p>It is tidy and well-presented without going overboard on design.</p> <p>It's an A3 of two halves. The colour and the layout on one side are striking and use the timetable to show what is happening. The reverse is a text-filled sheet with no visual impact. But collectively, it is a summing up of oodles of information.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>It is unfortunate that the Plan's page one timelines (top and bottom of the page) are not aligned. It tends to undercut the strength of the overall design.</p> <p>This piece is awash with acronyms and abbreviations. It is a way of compressing information, and most will be at the experienced reader's fingertips. But others may not come so readily to mind and cause the reader to slow down. This lowers the value of the short sharp material.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>The recommendations in the coversheet promise the follow up actions.</p> <p>Good to see monitoring and reporting explicit.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Something to indicate the timing of the monitoring report would be useful.</p>



C.7 New Zealand's Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>Short and sharp piece says it is putting a case for more time before Cabinet considers the draft LT-LEDS for submission. Problems with the current draft are outlined, as is the value more work could add. A fallback position is included. All this is crisp and tells a bit of a tale. But this is pushback against an unstated position – analogous to second opinion work.</p> <p>This lack of detail and context extends to other aspects of the situation – where are MfE's views? Their lack makes the paper uninformed and a bad basis for a Ministerial decision. Good practice would mean being open about what is going on – a joint paper?</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>There is a concise situation report.</p> <p>It concerns joint work with MfE on a document (LT-LEDS) to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC.) But it must be approved by Ministers.</p> <p>The UNFCCC submission timetable is included</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>There is no discussion of the status quo and what is supporting it. So, according to the recommendations, the present plan is to submit the draft to the Cabinet ENV Committee on 6 August. It is unclear whether that is a previously decided report-back or just an arrangement.</p> <p>The inclusion of any previous decisions – or saying there were none – would be a great help.</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>The shape of this piece is unusual. It is clearly making points to challenge the status quo.</p> <p>The arguments are sensible on the face of it, but lack clarity and have no evidential support.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>And there is no clear statement of the present situation and who wants it to remain in place. Logically this is a second opinion,⁷ and so it needs to be structured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out the situation (and its supporters) • say why there is no rush to submit – as the deadline is December say (referenced) • discuss the advantages of delay – what could be done in the time and why that is valuable compared with urgency • state clear actions for the Minister to take (does the timing for ENV need changing?)
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>The drafting is tidy, with only one minor slip.</p> <p>The paper is short.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Plainly many aspects of the situation are missing from this paper – and it's not obvious why. Was there a project plan for this work, and how is it going? Is this relitigating previous decisions? What is the MfE view? Where is the pressure for the urgent submission coming from? How is the drafting process going in terms of quality of output?</p> <p>Looking at what is here without assuming too much about the missing information, this looks like a joint process breakdown being taken to a Minister for resolution.</p> <p>Normal practice for such situations is to exhaust all other possible resolution methods first and include the information about what has been done in the appeal to the Minister.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>The recommendations propose actions by the Minister.</p>
Areas for improvement	

⁷ See Master Class No 35 *Second Opinion Advice*, where we stress the need to consult with the other agencies and strive to present the material as clearly as possible https://nzler.org.nz/static/media/filer_public/b4/32/b432f7a6-f7f5-4f11-bf59-df45a28f8247/brief_35_second_opinion_advice.pdf



C.8 s6(a)

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Sensible brief on two initiatives New Zealand has been asked to join. While both are in line with our traditional human rights position and are sponsored by 'good company', s6(a) The brief has sound advice – including how to react as the story unfolds.</p> <p>s6(a)</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Context is clear in both cases, s6(a)</p> <p>The general policy background is neatly sketched.</p> <p>Our international relationships are brought to bear.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>s6(a)</p> <p>. This balance is not laboured but instead discussed as one where we have experience with mitigation. And it is proposed that similar efforts (stressing our neutral principled motives) will be effective again.</p>
Areas for improvement	s6(a)
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Romps smoothly and tidily through these issues. The drafting just strides along and makes an easy read.</p> <p>Details of the proposals are usefully attached.</p> <p>Draws out the differences between the two initiatives.</p>
Areas for improvement	The heading structure is sparse and tending to the old fashioned as it lacks an indication of the content of the relevant sections.
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	This advice is to trigger a process of negotiation and participation. The scope of that coverage is shown.
Areas for improvement	



C.9 Quarantine-Free Entry to Australia

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Information paper produced by Border Sector Governance Group on announcement by Australian governments of a 'hotspot' proposal. It carefully looks at the implications for New Zealand directly and indirectly – in terms of the trans-Tasman COVID-Safe Travel Zone (TTCSTZ).</p> <p>Would be improved by a clearer framework about what New Zealand's aims are. This would allow the key points to be better based. It is really an aide mémoire.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Purpose clear.</p> <p>Context included.</p> <p>Links to the TTCSTZ work.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Simple, multi-stage framework used – examine the implications for us by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring the proposal as it stands • looking at a possible extension to New Zealand • considering what it means for TTCSTZ. <p>Different classes of travellers are used to investigate the effects. This is clear and makes sense as the different aspects can be drawn out.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Not obvious what the objectives are – in other words, what counts as a cost or benefit, respectively. (There is strange advice to note that travellers are not paying full MIQ costs.)</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Generally well-drafted and flows along, showing its multi-agency origins.</p> <p>Tidy.</p> <p>Bolding in places shows the way the discussion goes.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>More active and content-rich headings would be an improvement.</p> <p>The various aspects of risk are dealt with as they come up. A separate and explicit risk section would organise the information more.</p> <p>Hard to see why eight senior Ministers should sign off 10 noting recommendations. This is not sound practice. It is just a paper to be read for information. This makes it more like an aide-mémoire than a report.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Officials will continue to monitor the proposal and keep Ministers informed.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.10 2021-24 Triennium 'International Development Cooperation' Allocations

Overall assessment	
3	<p>A high-level description of a system that allocates a large amount of money over three years in a way that is left somewhat hazy. However, it does give the Minister an overview.</p> <p>This is an unusual treatment of a large amount of public money. It deserves a much more serious approach. More examples and a clear description of how the approvals work would ensure the Minister is left with a firm grasp of the role she plays and what she is doing by approving this proposal. An options analysis would show why this allocation was optimal.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Purpose stated on the front page.
Areas for improvement	<p>Limited background on how the process works despite this being a new Minister.</p> <p>A helpful briefing would show where the money is going (the headings are opaque) and clarify the process described here and what will unfold in the future.</p> <p>What is the status of this paper? Is it a decision support piece asking the Minister to endorse the proposal? If allocations can change, who changes them? What are the criteria? Where does the Minister fit into the whole funds' approval system??</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>The approach is to provide a high-level description of the situation. What is committed strongly and weakly, and what is still at large. This financial overview helpfully sizes up what is going on. And then, it adds a general outline of the way the Ministry looks at things and discusses clumps of spending. This shows the way the funds are parcelled out.</p> <p>This gives the reader a high-level view but only occasionally includes detail or an illustrative example.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>How can these general clumps of spending be justified without an analysis of options? Were other possible distributions considered and cast aside? Where did these proposals come from?</p> <p>It does not indicate the Minister's role. Nor of the whole system of approvals. Too many obvious questions remain unanswered. Who signs off on the shifts in allocation? What process is used? How does the Minister reconcile the set of "annual commitments to Parliament" described in the Key points? An annex with a reconciliation could show these.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>While the drafting is smooth, it is achieving a short paper at the cost of including vital information.</p> <p>Tidy.</p> <p>A nice, coloured diagram (but adds little).</p>
Areas for improvement	There are lots of devices that could address the lack of fundamental information here. More data would provide context. And a few case studies would show how projects are reported and discussed with the Minister. Attaching an example of a quarterly report would be helpful.
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	There is going to be quarterly reporting.
Areas for improvement	



C.11 Engagement in the global education architecture

Overall assessment	
4	<p>A well-written piece that systematically goes through the arguments why the Prime Minister (or Minister) should not attend. A good piece of analysis, backed by evidence and experience.</p> <p>Worth tidying up the recommendations to make easier for Ministers to handle and be clearer about the next steps.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Purpose of the paper is very clear.
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Uses evidence to back up the arguments.</p> <p>Well-referenced.</p> <p>Analysis is underpinned by reference to New Zealand's priorities for supporting education in the Pacific and Pacific countries priorities.</p> <p>Explains the history and impact of the global education architecture in the Pacific.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Could do more to show the s6(a)</p> <p>Add some examples, or use a diagram to show the mismatch.</p> <p>Any dates for the meetings listed in para 4?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Clear and well written.</p> <p>Great key points section, which boils down the essence of the paper.</p> <p>Free and frank.</p> <p>Is clear why the paper is being referred on – both on the front page and in the recommendations.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Consider using active headings and subheadings. This would make the paper an easier, quicker read and emphasise the key points.</p> <p>The recommendations aren't set out so that the Prime Minister can easily indicate her agreement.</p> <p>Rec 1 recommends no political level representation, but will officials be attending? That could be clearer.</p> <p>Draft responses attached (but not in our copy).</p> <p>Worth giving reassurance about risk – or lack thereof.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Promises further advice.
Areas for improvement	Does there need to be any communication of this decision with Pacific leaders?



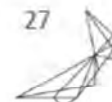
C.12 Strengthening New Zealand's Supply Chain Resilience

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>A short cover note over a detailed piece of analysis.</p> <p>The Discussion Paper itself was hard going. It needed to be made an easier and quicker read given it was going to a significant number of busy Ministers. Things like an introduction/road map to the structure, more headings and subheadings, active subheadings, practical examples.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Clear Purpose statement.
Areas for improvement	<p>Purpose statement indicates that you wish to "seek confirmation that Ministers are comfortable...". But the recommendations and list of referrals are not consistent with this. They have only one Minister for an actual decision – the paper is being referred for information to other Ministers.</p> <p>Doesn't reference earlier briefings.</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Lists and describes several options. Includes a general discussion of the merits or otherwise of each of them.</p> <p>Nice categorisation of different products and services – this helped to think about the problem in different ways.</p> <p>Good referencing.</p> <p>Excellent coverage of international approaches and their effectiveness.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) They could be pulled out and used explicitly, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p> <p>The Key points section could be clearer which agencies have been involved. A footnote would do. s6(a)</p> <p>Light on examples – except when you get to the table on pages 12/13. Adding some more into the text would help illustrate the points you are making.</p> <p>Not clear s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) , which had a New Zealand source, and which were imported.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	Decent summary in the covering paper.
Areas for improvement	<p>Discussion paper was text-heavy (e.g. pages 16 and 17 have no headings at all) – more headings and subheadings are needed. And make them active subheadings, so they emphasise the key points. This would make it an easier read for the plethora of busy Ministers to whom it is being referred.</p> <p>Poor table formatting, e.g. page 13. Try not to break up tables mid-row and repeat the heading if they go over a page.</p> <p>Discussion paper would have benefited from a road map paragraph that sets out the structure of the paper. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) , rather than being embedded s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g) – and only featuring late in the paper.</p> <p>Lists agencies consulted, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Sets out a detailed list of next steps in the recommendations.
Areas for improvement	s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)



C.13 COVID-19: Fourteenth Feedback Report from New Zealand Business and Industry

Overall assessment	
3.5	Great snappy information piece. Ministers will appreciate this sort of intelligence on what stakeholders think and are experiencing. Well written and easy to read at pace. Didn't cover the so what? Are there any of these items that need follow-up?
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Clear Purpose statement. Obviously one in a series of reports.
Areas for improvement	But little reference to previous reports. Are these ongoing issues – or new ones? That is worth making clearer.
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	Good use of data to support the arguments. Wide range of stakeholder engagement is evident – uses MFAT's contacts.
Areas for improvement	These sorts of papers always run the risk of being a laundry list. That's probably not such an issue with this one, as different Ministers will have different interests. But still worth highlighting anything more significant or wide-reaching. Lacking the so what. Are there any issues that need follow-up by Ministers? Or those on which you intend to provide further advice? Or which are incorporated into existing work programmes?
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	Great Key points section. All important when a large number of Ministers (perhaps only with peripheral interests) are getting the report. Crisp and tidy. Keep working on the formatting. It's worth investing time and energy into the format of regular reports (given they are done often). Try using more active subheadings and more graphs, diagrams, charts and infographics.
Areas for improvement	Using active headings and subheadings would make the key messages stand out.
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	Next steps are not evident.



C.14 Purchase of Vaccines for Polynesia and the Realm

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>Succinct and well-written briefing tackling a difficult decision. It clearly sets out the previous Cabinet decisions and works within them. Some good arguments for the purchases, but also balances the risks and other issues to be considered. Nicely done, given the levels of uncertainty.</p> <p>Could be clearer about the rationale for purchasing only one vaccination type; and what the fallback position might be if this one doesn't come off.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement which captures the decision to be made. This is good practice. It's much more specific than the usual Purpose statement.</p> <p>Sets out the previous Cabinet decision and the parameters in which the Minister's decision is to be made.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Deals well with the uncertainties. There are plenty!</p> <p>Helpfully explains the issues with cold storage.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Could be more explicit about why there should only be one type of vaccine purchased for use in the Realm countries and in Polynesia – assume it is easier to manage and coordinate training and logistics. But say that. Or if covered previously, remind the Minister.</p> <p>Could be clearer about the number of doses to be purchased – we assume this was covered in the earlier paper, but that isn't said.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Short and sweet.</p> <p>Good to see a paper like this all written in dot points.</p> <p>Includes a section on risk.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Is the risk section comprehensive enough? What if this doesn't come off? There is still uncertainty about whether Novovax will be approved. What happens then?</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Provides advice about communications.</p>
Areas for improvement	



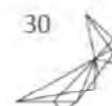
C.15 Impact of Global Trade Policy Uncertainty on New Zealand Firms, and the Role of Free Trade Agreements in Reducing Uncertainty

Overall assessment	
4	Great informative pieces about new evidence on the benefits of Free Trade Agreements. It does the job without getting too technical. The graphs with labels help to show the effect. But, not enough about any downsides of the model or its long-run application.
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Good Purpose statement.
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	Backed by expert advice. Well-referenced. Explains the hypothesis behind the work. Gives a sense of the scale of the impacts of both uncertainty and certainty.
Areas for improvement	Is this type of approach used internationally? There are risks and downsides in any model (and limitations on any analysis). The paper could do more to explain these. What assumptions have been made? How robust is the data?
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	Good graphs which clearly illustrate the points being made. Labelling regarding world economic events is helpful. However, they were a bit fuzzy in our version of the paper. Well-written. It explains some complex concepts and methodologies clearly and succinctly. Not an easy thing to do.
Areas for improvement	Spelt January wrong in para 6.
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	Could be clearer about how you are going to use this work – published? Update it regularly? What ongoing monitoring and review will there be?



C.16 Global Response Options to Address Marine Litter and Microplastics

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>Well-structured short, sharp paper that provides a concise overview of the proposed global action to combat marine plastic pollution and New Zealand's positioning. The paper sought agreement that New Zealand commits in principle to support a global approach.</p> <p>Given a commitment was sought, the paper needed to be clearer about what New Zealand was signing up to. For example, what order of magnitude financial contribution could be involved? What additional regulatory undertakings could we be committed to?</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Purpose clearly set out.</p> <p>Discusses the proposed timeframe and why the Minister is receiving this advice now.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Useful to include a table on next steps to help clarify why the Minister is receiving this advice now.</p> <p>Is there previous advice on this issue or decisions that needed to be referenced?</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	Useful analysis of the process to date, the positioning of partner countries and where New Zealand needs to position itself.
Areas for improvement	<p>Limited analysis of the underlying problem – the tragedy of the commons – and how policy options such as unilateral short term policy measures and longer term collective actions would address the problem.</p> <p>Some limited discussion of potential policy levers is in the Appendix, but this discussion is not brought forward into the main report.</p> <p>Could do more to articulate the nature and extent of New Zealand's interest in collective action – given we have the 3rd largest economic exclusive zone in the world.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Crisply written paper.</p> <p>Makes good use of active headings to guide the reader through the paper.</p> <p>Useful Appendix illustrated some of the practical implications.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Useful to provide some evidence on the size of the prize and hence the value of coordinated action in the main report. There was some material that could be brought forward from the Appendix on the current trends in plastic flow into the ocean.</p> <p>Lacked an explicit discussion of risks. Given that agreement in principle was sought for New Zealand to announce its support, these should be covered off explicitly.</p> <p>The paper needed to clarify what New Zealand would likely be committed to and what contribution would be required.</p> <p>Watch the use of noting recommendations. Four of the six recommendations were noting, and a number of these would be better covered in the key points</p> <p>Careful formatting tables – the page break in the middle of page 8 reduced the readability of the material significantly.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Text highlights the events leading to an announcement of New Zealand's position at a Ministerial Conference in September.
Areas for improvement	Consider including a table with a timeline that would help clarify for the Minister the next steps and how this was expected to unfold.



C.17 United Kingdom – Integrated Review

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>Overview briefing for a number of Ministers commenting on the UK Integrated review of defence and foreign policy priorities.</p> <p>A model of a concise 4.5-page briefing for busy Ministers with key points, short recommendations and commentary on selected issues. Focuses on the issues that are relevant for New Zealand.</p> <p>Useful to go beyond commentary to include more critical analysis. While the strategy purports to cover the period to 2030, would it survive a change of Government? Does the UK have the capability and commitment to execute the change in strategy?</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>A clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Clearly explains why this report is being provided as background and context for the Ministers at this time.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Provides commentary including an overall summary and explores three main themes relevant to New Zealand – s6(a)</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Useful to include more critical analysis beyond the issue of lifting the nuclear cap.</p> <p>For example, how well did the review land across the UK political spectrum? Is it likely to be enduring? How will the gap between broad strategy and implementation be bridged?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Succinct 4.5-page commentary that gives the reader an easy ride.</p> <p>Well written with some nice turns of phrase.</p> <p>Uses active headings to guide the reader through the document.</p> <p>Draws out the implications for New Zealand rather than leaving it up to the reader.</p> <p>Good use of bolding to bring out key issues</p>
Areas for improvement	
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>Next steps are left unclear. What follow up is proposed?</p>



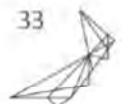
C.18 Manaaki New Zealand Scholar Border Exception Category

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Crisp report seeking the Minister's agreement to explore creating a new category of Border Control Exemption for those on funded New Zealand Scholarships.</p> <p>Needed to be more upfront on the binding constraints facing the MIQ system and risks posed to the right of return for New Zealanders living overseas.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Clear statement of purpose backed by succinct recommendations to guide the reader through what is proposed.
Areas for improvement	How pressing is the matter? What is the timeframe for execution?
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Provides a rationale for an Exception Category using the criteria for managing exceptions to border restrictions. Good to see explicit criteria being used to evaluate options.</p> <p>Good background on the New Zealand Scholarship programme and why it may be a policy priority.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>The argument that the binding constraint of MIQ capacity can be finessed by staggering the arrival of those arriving on NZ Scholarships needed more support as it does not withstand logical scrutiny.</p> <p>The legal risk to the Crown posed to the right of return for New Zealanders living overseas by allocating small blocks of MIQ capacity to those on scholarships needed bringing out more clearly.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Clearly structured and well-written paper that was easy to read and absorb.</p> <p>Includes a useful discussion of risks.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Watch erring from advice into advocacy.</p> <p>Useful to include Immigration NZ/MBIE's initial views on the merits and risks of the proposal.</p> <p>Also, consider including tactical advice on a fallback option targeting the exception on scholars from the Pacific as they have limited opportunities to access tertiary education elsewhere.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Clearly sets out the next steps in the process for consideration of the exemption category.
Areas for improvement	



C.19 Operation Burnham: National Detention Policy

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Good briefing pack including a draft Cabinet Paper, a consultation draft of the Detention Policy supported by a cover note and talking points for the Minister.</p> <p>The Cabinet paper lacked a substantive Executive Summary. It would have been improved with a short summary covering what Ministers were signing up for and what would be different.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clearly sets out the purpose of the suite of papers and the proposed next steps.</p> <p>References earlier decisions.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Logically sets out the proposed legal framework and how it would apply at different stages - in advance, on the ground, after the event - and under diverse command structures.</p> <p>Discussed four options for consultation in a general advantages disadvantages way to support recommending a preferred option.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>A formal set of criteria is best practice for options assessment.</p> <p>Useful to explicitly include the perspective of the operational agencies on issues with implementation. Most policy failures occur due to problems in implementation rather than fundamental flaws in design. How easy will the new framework be to apply, and what key ambiguities will remain?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Very useful cover paper that succinctly covers key points and next steps.</p> <p>Cabinet Paper covers the ground clearly and succinctly.</p> <p>The suite of papers is well constructed, easy to read with minimal jargon.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Ministers needed an 'in a nutshell summary' summarising the framework and showing how it differs from what is in place, as this policy affects various portfolios in the external sector. The Cabinet paper lacked a substantive Executive Summary that included the key points. The cover note provides a good example of a succinct summary of the draft framework.</p> <p>This is a controversial and complex area, so it is essential to simplify the issues without being simplistic.</p> <p>Discusses the consultation undertaken but is unclear on the other agencies' views on the draft Policy Framework, which has yet to be finalised. Are any issues likely to emerge as part of finalising the framework?</p> <p>Useful to highlight key areas of risk – implementation risk in particular.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Clear next steps and possible timeframes depending upon which consultation option is selected.</p> <p>Regular review mechanism established.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.20 Air New Zealand: Control and Export Status of US Navy Engines

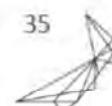
Overall assessment	
3	<p>Short briefing for joint Ministers on the regulations applying to Air New Zealand should they win the tender to overhaul US Navy engines.</p> <p>Made heavy weather of a heads up-briefing. While brief (just over one page), in dot point format, the lack of structure and signposting made the argument hard for a busy Minister to follow.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Useful Purpose statement and helpful title that framed the advice being provided.</p> <p>Clearly signals the tight timeframe and why Ministers are receiving this advice now.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Needed to clarify where decision rights lie. Is this just for the Ministers' information as it is a function vested in the Secretary on Foreign Affairs, or is it delegated to the Secretary?</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Provides legal analysis of the status of the engines and whether they are controlled items.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Assumes that the reader knows the relevant regime rather than specifying the criteria for controlled items on the Strategic Goods list.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Uses dot points which are an effective tool for a heads up briefing.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>The Recommendations duplicated the dot points – consider putting the recommendation first and using the dot points to elaborate.</p> <p>The length of the dot points spreading over one page made the argument hard to follow.</p> <p>Needed more signposting with active headings to guide the reader through the dot pointed arguments. Our Masterclass brief 41 <i>Effective key points</i>⁸ contains tips on how to use dot points to good effect.</p> <p>The final dot point illustrates the importance of this signposting. It relates to the export of another set of engines that Air New Zealand is servicing. Without subheadings, this is confusing to the reader.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Conveys the timeframe and urgency of this briefing.</p>
Areas for improvement	

⁸ See Appendix E.



C.21 s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

Overall assessment		
4	<p>A crisp briefing with a well-explained rationale s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) relationship discussion.</p> <p>The paper could be improved with a reminder paragraph s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p>	Good risk and
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits		
Good practice	<p>A clear statement of purpose.</p> <p>s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p>	
Areas for improvement	<p>How urgent is the matter?</p>	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence		
Good practice	<p>s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p> <p>Benefits to New Zealand are set out clearly.</p> <p>Draws out potential 'trade-off' between trade and humanitarian issues and explains your judgement.</p>	
Areas for improvement	<p>s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p>	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story		
Good practice	<p>Tidy set of key points covering the essentials.</p> <p>Good discussion on why New Zealand has been asked to s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii) s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p> <p>Good coverage of the bilateral and other risks.</p> <p>Short paragraphs.</p> <p>Tight editing.</p>	
Areas for improvement	<p>Active headings would help you headline the story better.</p> <p>Would be good to indicate when everything is happening – a few dates or a timeline.</p>	
Action: Identifies who is doing what next		
Good practice	<p>s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p>	
Areas for improvement	<p>s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)</p> <p>How closely do we track</p>	



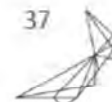
C.22 s6(a)

Overall assessment	
5	<p>s6(a)</p> <p>The paper could be improved with a reminder of who chairs/sits on the Security and Intelligence Board (SIB) and what other Ministers share a direct portfolio interest.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement on the cover sheet.</p> <p>The immediacy of the issue is addressed with the s6(a) advice headed to the PM the same day.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Logically set out with legal framework to indicate the rationale for acting, who holds the s6(a) authority and what it means once the s6(a) is enacted.</p> <p>International impacts of making the s6(a) are explained.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Well done getting the Key Points on a single page.</p> <p>Tightly written.</p> <p>Short paragraphs.</p> <p>s6(a)</p> <p>Risks woven into the briefing and mitigated by the process that is being followed.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>As there are always multiple readers and Ministers have a lot to remember, the paper could remind the Minister who chairs and sits on the SIB and which other Ministers share a direct interest.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>DPMC to prepare the comms plan.</p> <p>Clear advice for the Minister and officials s6(a)</p>
Areas for improvement	



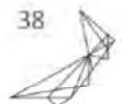
C.23 Opportunity to join Group of Friends of United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>A concise and compelling briefing on the rationale for joining the Group of Friends. A stellar Key Points section and a report that is tightly edited with a strong risk section that makes this a winner.</p> <p>Some indication of where the resource implications fall would help the Minister see that you don't have spare capacity.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>A clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>The paper signals we need to move fast if we want to be a founding member.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Rationale for joining links back to the Ministry's strategic direction.</p> <p>Good background on the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and why it is a policy priority.</p> <p>Weighing of interests against risks with UNCLOS underpinning security and prosperity.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Even if you can absorb the costs, the paper could be improved with some indication of the costs/cost types of joining – e.g. the number of meetings, demand on any particular posts.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>First rate Key Points section.</p> <p>The list of other founding member states helps to provides reassurance we are in the like company.</p> <p>s6(a)</p> <p>Resourcing from within current budget noted.</p> <p>Nice set of 'wrap-up' dot points to compel the case for joining.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Active subheadings could be used to press home the headlines.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>A word on how this fits with your monitoring of SDG14 and Ministry strategy would show that you are tracking your outcomes and deliverables.</p>



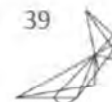
C.24 Legal Process for Genocide Determinations

Overall assessment	
3.5	Good coverage of what constitutes genocide, the international case law s9(2)(g)(i) s6(a), s9(2)(h)
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	s6(a), s9(2)(h) Is there a particular reason this briefing is being put forward at this time?
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	Strong legal framework to the paper. Good coverage of historical cases. s9(2)(h) s9(2)(h)
Areas for improvement	s6(a) A simple table could be a good way to present it. Otherwise, it is a list and paras 34–35 would suffice for now.
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	s6(a), s9(2)(h) This means signposted headings to assist the transition from the general to the specific. Helpful coverage of how other jurisdictions are approaching then matter. Good use of the annex to explain the legal detail and previous cases.
Areas for improvement	s9(2)(h)
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	What do you want from the referral to the PM?



C.25 Te Aratini – Ministerial Attendance

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>A concise compelling case for why it is the Foreign Minister who should take the in-person lead at Te Aratini.</p> <p>A bit more on risks (other than New Zealand travellers) that you have identified to ensure a successful event could improve the paper and ensure the consideration is watertight.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>A clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Clear explanation of why this report is in front of the Minister at this time.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Compelling logic as to why the Foreign Minister is the right person for the job – parity with other international speakers, commitment to Māori, maximising the return on investment, etc.</p> <p>You set out the opportunities while in Dubai.</p> <p>Slide pack provides a problem definition and a clear objective for Te Aratini in the form of a research question. This approach helps to demonstrate your focus.</p> <p>Symposium themes provide an organising framework</p> <p>Programme components well set out – services as a check against the research question.</p> <p>Handy set of indigenous facts in the slide pack</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Good coverage of the global leaders who are lining up for the event.</p> <p>Ministerial options provided if Minister Mahuta opts not to attend.</p> <p>Vaccine and MIQ risks are covered, and more advice is to come.</p> <p>Short paragraphs.</p> <p>Tightly edited.</p> <p>Slide pack tells the full story and provides good supporting information on the case for high-level participation.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>What is on the full Global Programme at Expo 2020?</p> <p>Are there other risks to note with the Expo - with COVID globally and securing other high-level participants?</p> <p>What is the status of Annex 1? Is it a slide deck just for this briefing or an existing share resource? Can it be repurposed?</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Announcement to coincide with Matariki – and follow up actions listed for assembling the event.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>How do you intend to judge success?</p>



C.26 s6(a)

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>Nicely woven narrative that covers the dynamic for resolving s6(a) . Excellent coverage of the key relationships and the way forward.</p> <p>A bit more on the global cumulative risk would give more context around where this specific case sits.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Upcoming Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting provides the basis for this briefing now.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Very helpful to have the problem set out in practical terms.</p> <p>Clear description of the options s6(a)</p> <p>Good explanation of what is to happen against the WHO standards and international practice.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Nice flowing narrative.</p> <p>Good coverage of Pacific and key states' views and reactions.</p> <p>Tidy key points section.</p> <p>Nice set of proactive and responsive talking points. All on a single page.</p> <p>Good use of footnotes for details.</p> <p>Next steps covered with key international partners.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>s6(a)</p> <p>The paper could be more consistent in the use of subheadings. We tend to favour descriptive headings as questions do not have their answers included. But moving away from the stale generic headings is a plus.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Referrals to other Ministers.
Areas for improvement	Are there plans to track this?



C.27 Hong Kong: New Zealand-Hong Kong Relationship Stocktake

Overall assessment		
4	<p>A well-structured stocktake s6(a) nicely divided in the body of the briefing and well-layered appendices.</p> <p>The paper could be improved with more s6(a)</p>	The paper is
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits		
Good practice	<p>A clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Dates of law changes in China and a previous indication that this brief was coming provide the "why now?"</p>	
Areas for improvement		
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence		
Good practice	<p>Sound legal underpinning to the changes in China and international legal instruments such as Interpol Charter.</p> <p>Tight logic used in explaining immediate changes and fit for purpose arrangements.</p>	
Areas for improvement	The paper could be improved by stating the criteria used to decide which category of adjustment, no change, further assessment.	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story		
Good practice	<p>Nicely structured division of the three categories for adjustment.</p> <p>Risks are interwoven, but best practice would be to draw back up and summarise what is of most concern and why and how that is prioritised for action.</p> <p>Tightly edited.</p> <p>Good use of appendices.</p> <p>Bold topic headings make the briefing easy to access</p> <p>Media release and talking points provided for a 'one-stop shop' briefing.</p>	
Areas for improvement	<p>When will you report back on the cooperation settings still under assessment?</p> <p>Can you say a bit more on countries in a similar position are responding? s6(a)</p>	
Action: Identifies who is doing what next		
Good practice	Further assessment and monitoring were noted.	
Areas for improvement	s6(a)	



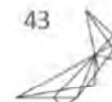
C.28 Solomon Islands – supporting economic and financial reform

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>A briefing with a clear focus on strategy and reform.</p> <p>More effective use of tables or figures to organise programme elements and dollars for New Zealand and Core Economic Working Group (CEWG) partners would make this an easier read.</p> <p>This paper needs a bit more detail on the funding sources, purposes, and distribution of funds.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Appearance of this paper tied to recent Solomon Island Cabinet decisions.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Clear logic presented around the policy reform linked Budget support rationale for engagement.</p> <p>Case well made for the two positions.</p> <p>Appendix 1 helps to show where the Solomons fits into the development cooperation programme.</p> <p>Appendix 2 helps to make sense of the reform programme.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>A summary of the CEWG funds and New Zealand funds over the three years would help the reader see the whole picture.</p> <p>Why \$12m? Is the optimal amount from the budget? What would you get for \$10m or \$16m, for example?</p> <p>Risks and mitigation need consideration – e.g. capability building and sustainability of our investment.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Tidy key points section.</p> <p>The background on CEWG and the development partners helps to tell the story of our strategic engagement.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>The paper would be improved by indicating where these funds are being drawn from, how large the fund is, what it is left, if any, and budgeted against.</p> <p>The references to funding support to the Solomons would benefit from being organised in a table so that there is a single organised reference point.</p> <p>More active subheadings would light this paper up.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>How is this to be monitored?</p>



C.29 Samoa – Responding to the Economic Impact of COVID-19

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>A concise brief seeking short term budget support during COVID-19. Some helpful context for a new Minister on our relationship and approach to support for Samoa.</p> <p>The briefing could be improved with more clarity about where this request sits in the totality of existing aid resources for Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and what else might be prioritised for other PICs so the Minister can see the whole picture across the Pacific and for Samoa. A table would do the trick.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	A clear Purpose statement.
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Clear explanation of the economic problems caused by COVID-19.</p> <p>Good use of numbers on the magnitude of the downturn.</p> <p>The approach to our relationship with Samoa is well set out.</p>
Areas for improvement	s6(a)
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Follow up briefing mentioned to address longer term strategy.</p> <p>While this is a short term note, the briefing demonstrates longer term thinking.</p> <p>Short paragraphs.</p> <p>Clear explanation of how the financing will be provided.</p> <p>Next steps covered.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Some free and frank assessment of how critical the situation is would compel the case further.</p> <p>Active headings could be used to drive the narrative.</p> <p>Informed decision-making means the Minister can see the whole picture. How much support is being provided for PICs for COVID-19? How much is there in support already? What is the trend line, how is it distributed? How much remains for this year unallocated?</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Samoa to report on how they will use the funds and to what effect.
Areas for improvement	



C.30 Partnering with the Pacific on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security, Livelihoods and Economic Resilience

Overall assessment	
4	<p>A request for funding supported with a clear rationale and attaching a handy report card on outcomes. While this is a product of the Pacific Community it is a useful summary to show what is happening and provides reliable evidence to back up the arguments.</p> <p>The paper could be improved with more discussion on what pot the funds are coming from, where else it is allocated and how much is left.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Approval sought for Pacific fisheries management expenditure.
Areas for improvement	Purpose includes more context than necessary.
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Clear background on coastal fisheries pressures.</p> <p>Regional efforts set out to show what the other partners are up to.</p> <p>Specific explanation of how the funding is to support development. Nice support from the Pacific Community report card. Would be good to see more of this type of helpful resource in MFAT briefings to reassure Ministers that aid is effective and that you are monitoring outcomes.</p> <p>Good exposition of data.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>It is hard for the Minister to know what pot these funds are sourced from, what funds are already committed and what resources remain.</p> <p>Some of the supporting data could be brought into the body of the report to strengthen the storyline.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Concise key points.</p> <p>Short paragraphs.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>A word on risks is needed to ensure that you are on to the task of ensuring that development objectives are protected.</p> <p>Active headings would allow you to headline the story.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	South Pacific Community's Report card provides a basis for decent monitoring of progress.
Areas for improvement	The briefing could be improved with a word on how you will follow the implementation and use of the New Zealand portion of the investment.



C.31 Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency Partnership: 2021-2026

Overall assessment	
4	<p>A good, short briefing on the role of the Forum Fisheries Agency and the need for New Zealand to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>However, the briefing could have done more to explain why this is the appropriate level of funding, given the increased funding required in the previous year.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Contains useful background information on the Agency, their role, levels of historic support etc.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Provides a little data of the contributions made by other parties (para 6). But you could perhaps provide more data to flesh this out?</p> <p>Attaches detailed information on the tuna fishery, and the performance of the Agency. It also includes a short summary of performance in the body of the paper (para 7).</p> <p>Notes consistency with other funding decisions (para 10).</p> <p>Explains the wider strategic context for the operation of the Agency and New Zealand's support for it.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Could do more to explain why funding levels should remain the same (at least initially), especially given they were increased last year. Would additional funding now give greater benefits? Is the agency still experiencing additional costs due to COVID-19?</p> <p>A discussion of the other options considered would help to ascertain that this is the 'right' level of funding support.</p> <p>Do you know what other countries/organisations are going to contribute?</p> <p>Would be helpful to know if this funding is within budget or not, i.e. has it been put aside?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>While risk is mentioned – it only covers health, safety and security of staff. Best give assurance that there aren't other risks and/or that they are well managed.</p> <p>Good key points section.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Watch for long sentences, e.g. first dot point on page 2. They make a paper harder to read. Long sentences should be stamped out, especially in a Key Points section – by their nature, Key Points should be short, sharp and easy to read at pace.</p> <p>Have other agencies been involved in the paper? Do they support the recommendations?</p> <p>Rec 2 seems to be slightly inconsistent with the last dot point in the Key points section.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>Be clear why you recommend that this paper be referred to other Ministers – e.g. for their information, comment or agreement?</p>



C.32 Proposed New Zealand Humanitarian Support to the Tigray Crisis

Overall assessment	
3	<p>A clearly written paper that provides plenty of useful background on the situation in Tigray and the need for humanitarian support.</p> <p>However, it failed to make the case as to why this level of support was being proposed.</p> <p>This would have been one of your early briefings to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs. More was needed to explain the rationale for providing aid, the level of aid, and the overall framework to take to making these sorts of recommendations (Or if it has been explained in your Briefing to the Incoming Minister – then, refer to it!).</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Clear Purpose statement.
Areas for improvement	No reference to earlier briefings on this matter. If there haven't been any, that's worth noting too.
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	Explains the thinking behind the proposed delivery partners.
Areas for improvement	<p>No options were given on the level of support proposed. What makes \$2.25m optimal? Is the amount consistent with a formula? Usual practice? Historically consistent with support provided for other humanitarian crises?</p> <p>Would have benefited from some background information on levels of support provided in other situations in recent times.</p> <p>Lacked a decision-making framework/intervention logic to explain why New Zealand should provide this support.</p> <p>What are other countries/international partners doing?</p> <p>Where does the funding come from? Is it within budget or not?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Well written – this makes it a quick read.</p> <p>Good Key Points section, which summarises the content of the paper.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Some errors in page numbering – two para 1s.</p> <p>No discussion of risk.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Notes that a media statement will be provided.
Areas for improvement	



C.33 Air India Flights in August

Overall assessment	
4	<p>A good paper that explains the situation and the benefits of trying to secure access to the flight for repatriating New Zealanders.</p> <p>A seamless piece of joint advice. These are always hard to pull off.</p> <p>Excellent treatment of risk, and mitigations – one of the best analyses and discussions of risk we've seen.</p> <p>To further improve readability – use some subheadings to break up the dot points.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Includes background on other similar flights.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Full explains the proposals on the table.</p> <p>Analysis is supported by data and evidence.</p> <p>Clearly sets out the negotiation parameters.</p> <p>Packed with practical information.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Explain why you support the repatriation flights. You mention increasing demand for financial assistance, is this all?</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Excellent coverage of a wide range of risks of the proposal, including mitigations.</p> <p>Tightly-worded recommendations that get to the essentials of the decision-making.</p> <p>Notes that MBIE has been involved and concurs with the recommendations. What about other agencies? E.g. Health, Customs?</p> <p>Clear and well written.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>We like papers written entirely in Key Points – this makes them short and sharp. But long sets of Key Points can make for some hard reading. It's worth adding some subheadings to break them up as they add structure and help emphasise the main points.</p> <p>Consider using a diagram to show who is on inbound and outbound flights and their timing.</p> <p>Odd sentence construction – second dot point.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>Remember to include a report-back to the Minister on progress and when that will be.</p>



C.34 CPTPP Accession Update

Overall assessment	
4	<p>A good paper outlines the process of what will occur and how to use it to advantage New Zealand's interests and trade agenda. It's a complicated and subtly nuanced approach – yet carefully and clearly explained in the paper.</p> <p>Worth trying to break up the text a bit more by using more subheadings. Active subheadings would also help reinforce the main messages in the paper.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Good Purpose statement. It goes further than just a general statement and provides a flavour of the paper.
Areas for improvement	There is no indication of previous briefings on this matter. Have there been any?
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Explains the requirements of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in allowing for the accession of other parties.</p> <p>Grounds the discussion in the wider strategic context, e.g. Trade for All, and the Waitangi Tribunal proceedings and the NZ-UK FTA negotiations.</p> <p>Clearly outlines the benefits of the UK acceding to the CPTPP.</p> <p>Explains how different steps in the process can be used to clarify UK intentions and to push New Zealand's trade agenda.</p> <p>Analyses two options for proceeding: UK as a sole applicant, or a cluster approach. Carefully outlines the nuances associated with both these approaches and how they are best managed.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Good to see ready to use talking points attached in case needed. These also included helpful defensive talking points – to be used to combat tricky issues!</p> <p>Notes stakeholder views and perspectives, including Māori perspectives.</p> <p>Explains the likely views and positions of other countries.</p> <p>Briefly mentions risk.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>It is a complex process. Consider adding a diagram to show the different phases of the process, the issues that may be addressed at each phase, and approximate timing. It may make the process clearer and easier to understand. A diagram could also be used to outline the cluster approach.</p> <p>Long sets of dot points can impede the flow. Try and break them up with some subheadings.</p> <p>The sixth dot point on page 2 talks about 'two further stages' – but only seems to discuss one of those stages. Make it clearer.</p> <p>In the recommendations, explain why you are proposing the paper is referred to other Ministers – in this case, for information.</p> <p>Are you sure the recommendations should be 'noting' recommendations? Yes, according to the Purpose statement, it's an update, but it does have the ring of getting your Minister to endorse the process you are following and back your tactical strategy for the negotiations.</p> <p>Would have benefited from some more use of headings in the paper itself. There are big blocks of text without any headings.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	When is it appropriate to update Ministers again?



C.35 New Zealand-UK FTA: Approval to exchange initial goods market access offers

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>A great briefing that is packed with data and evidence and explains the principled yet tactical approach to be taken in negotiations. This would give Ministers a good sense of what is going on and the stance you are proposing to take.</p> <p>Take more care with the wording and layout of your recommendations, given you are seeking an endorsement of your approach by several different Ministers.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>References earlier engagement on this matter and earlier Cabinet decisions (although there is no Cabinet reference).</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Has a clear principle-based approach to the proposal.</p> <p>Good use of data and examples to show the scale of the issues and the potential benefits to New Zealand.</p> <p>Nice table in Annex One, which gives more detail on the value of traffic and the range of products they are applied to.</p> <p>Uses a comparative analysis (EU negotiations) of other negotiations to show how this differs and why.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>A good example of free and frank advice.</p> <p>Well-written and an easy read – despite the complexity of the material.</p> <p>Notes the involvement of key stakeholders.</p> <p>Plenty of coverage of risk is woven into the paper.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Need to reorganise the recommendations so that each of the Ministers you are asking to agree to the directions can sign appropriately. Having separate signature blocks when a number of Ministers are being asked to sign-up a paper is a standard approach to making joint decision-making.</p> <p>Recommendations don't stand alone – ideally, they should reiterate the negotiating position outlined in the paper (second and third dot points on page 2).</p> <p>Generally not good practice to include pieces in the Key Points which aren't covered in the body of the paper (e.g. para 9).</p> <p>Para 7 re countering an unsatisfactory UK offer seems like a critical point that should be reflected in the Key Points section of the paper.</p> <p>Watch your page breaks – splitting lists of points makes them hard to read and easy for Ministers to miss things (top of page 7).</p> <p>Notes that other agencies have been involved in preparing this report. But doesn't mention their views or perspectives, nor say whether they support the recommendations or not.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	Notes that a progress report will be provided in mid-2021.
Areas for improvement	



C.36 Strengthening the Resilience of New Zealand's Supply Chains

Overall assessment	
4	<p>Good paper works well to get Ministers thinking about an issue, its wider implications, and what could be done about it in future similar situations. It also gives a sense of assurance that officials are collectively on to it! Good stuff.</p> <p>It could do a bit more to highlight MFAT's unique role and expertise on this matter and what it brings that other agencies involved can't.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	A think piece for the Minister to consider. It outlines the issues and provides some ways to think about them. Just what's expected in this sort of proactive piece.
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Uses some helpful and relevant international examples. But not clear as to whether this was a comprehensive assessment of international approaches or just a representative sample to illustrate different approaches.</p> <p>Used the example of Ebola as an historical example. Are there others?</p> <p>Good use of examples that came up during COVID-19 to help support the arguments.</p> <p>Starts to develop a way of thinking about s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p> <p>Explains the initiatives s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Para 3 of the attached paper note that s6(a) this has no evidential backing. It needs to. Especially given this statement is watered down somewhat by the first dot point in the Key Points section, s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p> <p>Worth thinking about what will happen over the medium term, i.e. before a return to normality – will supply chains continue to have difficulties? Or are there structural changes that have happened that mean they will be changed for some time?</p> <p>We would have expected to see s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) and how they play into these sorts of issues.</p> <p>Light on a discussion of export trade and pressures on it due to COVID, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Clearly written.</p> <p>Nice summary in the covering paper.</p> <p>Outlines the work a wider group of officials are doing on these issues.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Some missing paragraph numbering in the attached paper.</p> <p>s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv) Does it no longer think that this issue is important? s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)
Areas for improvement	s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)



C.37 Regional Digital Trade Initiative – starting exploratory discussions

Overall assessment	
3.5	<p>A helpful introduction to the work, and the complexities associated with involving various countries. Puts this matter in a wider context and explains the views and interests of other countries.</p> <p>It could do more to explain the practical benefits to NZ Inc of a Regional Digital Trade Initiative – in addition to the early mover benefits, especially given the concerns which are (very briefly) raised in this paper.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Notes an earlier briefing, but this is not specifically referenced (para 1).
Areas for improvement	Could do more to explain how this fits with other priorities and commitments – is there any work that will have to be dropped or delayed to commence work on this?
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Clearly explains the differences in views as to which countries should be included.</p> <p>Notes that the E-commerce chapters in the CPTPP and the TPP are a useful basis for this work.</p> <p>Provides some very brief background on other similar agreements and the work that is going on.</p> <p>Warns that it may take some time before knowing if this type of agreement is a possibility.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Would be helpful to know more about the possible benefits to NZ Inc. There is plenty of discussion about the ability to shape and influence by being involved early. But say more about the benefits to the New Zealand economy, business and citizens of this sort of initiative. Otherwise, it's hard to know what is at stake here. You Minister may well know, but this briefing is designed for other Ministers too.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>A good attempt at a diagram. It needed to be placed in the text where these matters were discussed, and have some explicit reference, rather than at the end of the paper.</p> <p>Briefly mentions the possible domestic concerns and how they can be managed.</p> <p>Notes that there will need to be a discussion with and involvement of Māori as part of the Treaty partnership.</p> <p>Well written.</p> <p>Decent headings which help the paper flow logically.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	<p>Sets out an engagement plan.</p> <p>Notes that further advice will be provided – but give a sense of when this will be.</p>
Areas for improvement	



C.38 Voting Submission: United National Security Council for 2022-23 Term

Overall assessment	
5	<p>Clear straightforward briefing. It does the job with a minimum of fuss. Great to see a one-page paper (plus recommendations), which gets all the essentials done!</p> <p>Keep working on the template for these short notes – they could be even shorter.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	<p>Short sharp background provided.</p> <p>Clear Purpose statement.</p> <p>Timelines are clear.</p> <p>Notes previous decisions.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Third dot point sets out the principles on which decisions on voting are made.</p> <p>Systematically goes through the different voting choices.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Nice clear recommendations. These flow easily from the paper.</p> <p>Tightly written. Doing it in dot points makes the drafting crisp and effective.</p> <p>s6(a)</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Leave a bit more white space at the top of the page – the section headings get caught up in the overall title.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	<p>Remember to say why you are recommending that a copy of this briefing be referred to the PM and Associate Minister – for endorsement? Comment? Or information? (Rec 4). On the front page, you have indicated that it is for information – but make this clear in the recommendations too.</p>



C.39 s6(a)

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>A carefully considered discussion of a tricky issue that maps a way forward. The paper works through the history of the issue, the potential ramifications of supporting or otherwise s6(a) s6(a) , and the alternative actions New Zealand could take. Diplomatic mastery is on show here!</p> <p>A fuller exploration and analysis of the alternative options would have further boosted the paper further.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	Clear Purpose statement.
Areas for improvement	<p>Provides a short background to the issue.</p> <p>Make sure you properly reference earlier papers (e.g. para 12. This makes it easier for the Minister's Office to find them if needed.</p>
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Describes the different considerations New Zealand must consider when reaching a position on this matter (para 6).</p> <p>Briefly describes two fallback options. But a more detailed analysis of the risks and benefits of these compared to the recommended way forward would strengthen this analysis. And help to prepare Ministers for further decisions if their preferred way forward doesn't come off.</p> <p>Uses evidence to show the level of concern about the mission.</p> <p>Explores the concerns with and the consequences s6(a) .</p> <p>Attaches relevant background information.</p>
Areas for improvement	
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Great discussion of risk.</p> <p>Free and frank.</p> <p>Clear and well written.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Notes that the paper has been prepared in consultation with s6(a) – but needs to be more explicit about their views. We assume they support the recommendations? But say so.</p> <p>Watch out for long sentences, e.g. the first dot point.</p> <p>Make sure the recommendations on referring the paper to other Ministers (rec 3) reflect their roles as per the paper's front page. This is the formal record of decision making – and needs to be consistent.</p> <p>Hanging heading bottom of page 5.</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	Notes that officials will provide further advice (rec 4) – but when?



C.40 Approach to New Zealand Engagement on International Human Rights Issues

Overall assessment	
4.5	<p>A nice outline of the framework sitting behind New Zealand's engagement on human rights issues. It highlights the matters to be considered and the trade-offs between them. Great to see some A3s.</p> <p>Some more examples to illustrate the application of the approach would have added to the paper.</p>
Context: Explains why the decision-maker is getting this and where it fits	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	Could be clearer about why this briefing is going up at this time.
Analysis: Is clear, logical and informed by evidence	
Good practice	<p>Sets out an approach to considering how and when New Zealand might engage on human rights issues. This appears to be consistent with your diplomatic policy framework. It's all about establishing a framework and communicating it clearly to the Minister.</p> <p>Gives a good explanation of the risks and complexities of the approach.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Is there any Treaty/te ao Māori analysis that would add to the picture? There is a brief reference to drawing from our bicultural experience (para 7) but only very brief.</p> <p>Consider adding in some examples of previous interventions showing this framework in action. This will help take it from theory to practice.</p>
Advice: Engages the decision-maker and tells the full story	
Good practice	<p>Great set of A3s. The UN engagement summary is nicely shown, with good colour coding. Given the content, it would have meant that the writing would be too small to do any other way. The second one on the Response Kete meets all the requirements of a good A3 – easy to navigate, packed with information, some graphics to add interests, and well structured. The third is a bit text-heavy and could do with more design input. But as a whole, they work well.</p> <p>An ideal briefing for a still newish Minister.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>Active subheadings would have made the report itself flow better.</p> <p>Could the recommendation be more than just a noting one?</p>
Action: Identifies who is doing what next	
Good practice	
Areas for improvement	Could have added a little more on when the Minister might expect briefings on these matters for the next scheduled UN engagements.



Appendix D Score translation tool for individual papers

The diagram below shows how the NZIER methodology and scores translate to the new Policy Quality Framework scores for individual papers.

Figure 6 Translating the Policy Quality Framework score into an NZIER score

The PQF scoring system		NZIER scoring system	
Mark	Meaning	Mark	Meaning
1	Unacceptable	5	Poor
2	Poor	6	Borderline: does the job but with risks
3	Acceptable	7	Adequate
4	Good	8	Good: goes beyond the task at hand somewhat
5	Outstanding	9+	Excellent

Source: NZIER



Appendix E Masterclass brief 41 Effective Key points

A few years ago, we produced a Masterclass on writing great Executive Summaries.⁹ We're now seeing more of a trend to producing what is effectively an Executive Summary, in the form of Key points. So, we thought it was a good time to cover off some of the dos and don'ts of writing effective Key points.

Key points are effectively an Executive Summary

They are just written in a different form. But all the usual principles should apply. These are:

- Make sure the Key points get the paper off to a good start – it colours the readers' impression of the paper overall.
- Make sure they have impact – the problem or opportunity definition must be clear and indicate size, scale, and impact.
- Remember, sometimes it can be the only part of the paper that a Minister pushed for time might read. It also serves as a refresher to the paper as a whole, either just ahead of the meeting or the item being considered.
- Focus on the essentials.
- Don't repeat blocks of text from other parts of the paper – summarise any critical points.

Writing style is critical

Using dot points means that a less formal writing style is required. But should still promote crisp, clear drafting.

But, you need to work at it to keep it succinct and clear. It needs to be easy to read and understand at pace.

Use:

- Plain English.

- Short sentences.
- Short paragraphs. It's fine to have more than one sentence per dot point – but don't let them become more than a few lines.
- Limit the number of dot points. If anything, it should be shorter than a standard Executive Summary. Also, remember without paragraph numbering (which they shouldn't usually need), they can be hard to navigate in a meeting setting.
- Use subheadings if it is getting a bit long or on multiple, but connected, topics.

Writing great Key points can be harder to do than 'normal' drafting. So, give yourself some time to draft and then polish your Key points. After all, they are one of the most critical parts of any paper, alongside the recommendations.

Think of the Key points as an elevator pitch or a short verbal introduction to the paper (for example, at the beginning of the discussion of the paper). This will help you further refine them, boil down the essentials of the paper, and yet not miss critical matters.

Avoid repetition

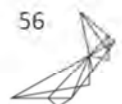
Don't repeat things at the beginning of the paper. It gets boring, wastes space and can turn off the reader. It can also be confusing if things are worded differently. Rules of thumb to consider are:

- If it's a really short paper, don't bother with Key points – use the Purpose statement to provide a super-summary instead. This should cover what the

⁹

https://nzier.org.nz/static/media/filer_public/13/70/137010dc-b2ab-44e8-a9ee-

05843bc01507/brief_no_3_masterclass_executive_summaries.pdf



Minister or Government must decide or do, why, and when.¹⁰

- Avoid noting recommendations that repeat the content of the Key points, unless they are formally required, e.g. in some statutory decision-making processes, they remain important.

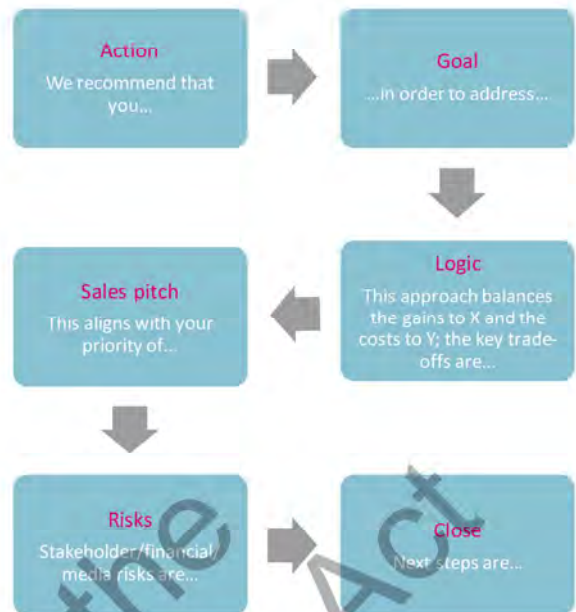
Look at the three elements: Purpose statement, Key points and recommendations together – they should be a package. Make sure they aren't repetitive yet cover what's needed.

At times we see advice papers where these three parts aren't clearly a package, e.g. the purpose of the paper might not be played out in the recommendations or recommendations appear that aren't covered in the Key points. This seriously detracts from the quality of the paper, and can worry the decision-makers. It can look like the advice hasn't been well thought through.

If it's a longer complex set of decisions – then use subheadings in the recommendations – and make them the same as any subheadings used in the Key points section.

Try this as a structure for your Key points section

As with a traditional Executive Summary, we suggest you focus on what you are recommending and why – rather than following the traditional structure of an advice paper (e.g. beginning with the background, problem definition and traversing your thinking before the recommendations come).



Make sure that the Key points are a focus of peer review

Peer review should give significant focus to the Key points section as it is one of the most important parts of the paper. Extra time spent will make a difference.

Things to focus on are:

- Is it easy to read and understand quickly?
- Does it cover the critical issues in the paper?
- Does it lead to the recommendations?
- Does it fit the purpose of the paper?
- Could it be shorter or tighter?

Try having a different peer reviewer look at the Key points once the paper is complete to ensure it stands alone and meets the needs of a time-pressured decision-maker.

¹⁰ For example: "You need to sign the attached letters by 10 June to encourage these Board members to renew their terms."



Key points only papers

We also see short briefings written in Key points only (alongside some recommendations). Done well, these are highly effective and efficient ways of communicating information and making simple decisions. They can and should be done more often! A busy Minister will always appreciate this sort of advice. They should follow all of the general points above – related to keeping things crisp, well structured, and leading into recommendations.

But choose this device carefully. This sort of paper shouldn't be used for complex issues or matters where there are many small issues to sort through.

Keep it short. A single page, or page and a half with subheadings, is about the maximum that can be read easily using dot points. Reading lots of dot points is harder to do than reading a similar sized piece of normal drafting.

This paper was written at NZIER, March 2021. For further information, please contact anyone from our policy advice team:

Cathy Scott at cathy.scott@nzier.org.nz

Todd Krieble at todd.krieble@nzier.org.nz

John Yeabsley at john.yeabsley@nzier.org.nz

NZIER | (04) 472 1880 | econ@nzier.org.nz

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