



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Matt Doocey	Portfolio Tourism and Hospital	
Title of Cabinet paper	Final Decisions on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy Amount	Date to be published	9 September 2024

List of docume	List of documents that have been proactively released					
Date	Title	Author				
July 2024	Final Decisions on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy Amount	Office of the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality				
29 July 2024	Final Decisions on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism CAB-24-MIN-0274 Minute	Cabinet Office				
17 July 2024	Cost Recovery Impact Statement: Review of the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy	MBIE				
17 July 2024	2425-0330 Approval of Cabinet paper Final Decisions on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy Amount for lodgement	MBIE				
1 July 2024	2324-3970 Ministerial Consultation on International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy Final Proposed Changes	MBIE				
20 June 2024	2324-3462 Policy decisions for the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy 2024 – outcome of consultation and next steps	MBIE				

Information redacted

<u>YES</u> / NO

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Some information has been withheld for the reasons of confidential advice to government; legal professional privilege; free and frank opinions; confidential information entrusted to the government; and privacy of natural persons.

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BRIEFING

Policy decisions for the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy 2024 – outcome of consultation and next steps

Date:	20 June 2024	Priority:	High
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2324-3462

Action sought					
	Action sought	Deadline			
Hon Tama Potaka Minister of Conservation	Provide direction on the final IVL policy decisions, following public consultation, ahead of returning to Cabinet for final decisions to the IVL.	24 June 2024			
Hon Matt Doocey Minister for Tourism and Hospitality		24 June 2024			

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)						
Name	e Position Telephone					
Danielle McKenzie	Manager, Tourism Stewardship and Systems, MBIE	Privacy of natural persons	✓			
James Johnson	Manager, Budget and Funding Policy, DOC	Privacy of natural persons				
Patrick West-Oram	Principal Policy Advisor, Tourism Stewardship and Systems, MBIE					

The following departments/agencies have been consulted								
Department of Conservation, The Treasury								
Minister's office to complete:	Approved	Declined						
	☐ Noted	Needs change						
	Seen	Overtaken by Events						
	See Minister's Notes	Withdrawn						
Comments								



BRIEFING

Policy decisions for the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy 2024 – outcome of consultation and next steps

Date:	20 June 2024	Priority:	High
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2324-3462

Purpose

To get direction on policy decisions following the public consultation on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL).

Executive summary

Public consultation resulted in 1101 submissions through an online survey or as written submissions to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

Respondents mostly favoured an increase of the IVL amount to \$100. However, officials recommend a more moderate increase to \$70, reflecting the need to balance revenue generation with a desire to minimise the impact of cumulative border costs on New Zealand visitor volumes.

Officials do not believe you need to make final decisions on how to spend funding generated by the IVL at this time. However, you may wish to signal that protecting our natural environment and biodiversity and investment in visitor infrastructure (both in communities and on Public Conservation Land and Water) remain core principles of the IVL fund.

Officials recommend aligning any change to the IVL amount with the forthcoming changes proposed in the Immigration Fees and Levy review, which take effect in October 2024. This is a tight timeline with no slippage in dates for key milestones.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

a **Note** MBIE has collaborated with the Department of Conservation on this briefing and wider advice on the IVL.

Noted

b **Note** the public consultation on the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) received 1011 online and 90 written submissions.

Noted

- c **Note** officials recommend the following principles when determining the IVL amount for Cabinet consideration:
 - i. **Equity:** Recognition of the need for international visitors to contribute further to the costs they create while acknowledging that not all visitors pay the IVL, and international tourism brings many benefits to New Zealand.
 - ii. **Efficiency:** Set the IVL amount to a level that generates sufficient funding to address challenges, without significantly risking visitor levels to New Zealand and visitor spend in New Zealand.

Noted

d **Agree** to the final policy decisions on the IVL following public consultation on the IVL amount (circle one):

Status Quo: remain at \$35	Agree / Disagree
Increase to \$50	Agree / Disagree
Increase to \$70 (Officials recommend)	Agree / Disagree
Increase to \$100	Agree / Disagree

e **Note** that Cabinet agreed that Treasury include a placeholder value at the midpoint (\$70) in Budget 2024, however this is an indicative figure which will change based on decisions taken following consultation on the IVL review.

Noted

f **Agree** to seek Cabinet agreement to delegate approval for IVL spending to the IVL Ministers.

Agree / Disagree

g **Agree** that protecting our natural environment and biodiversity and investment in visitor infrastructure (both in regions and Public Conservation Land and Water) remain core principles of the IVL funding.

Agree / Disagree

h **Agree** to direct officials to scope governance options to advise on IVL investment priorities and/or proposals.

Agree / Disagree

i **Provide** feedback on the attached draft Summary of Submissions.

j **Provide** feedback on the attached draft Cabinet Paper.

k **Agree** to forward this paper to the Minister of Finance once policy decisions have been taken.

Agree / Disagree

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Danielle McKenzie Manager, Tourism Stewardship and Systems Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

20 / 06 / 2024

Hon Tama Potaka Minister of Conservation

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Hon Matt Doocey Minister for Tourism and Hospitality

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Background

- 1. Following the Cabinet agreement, MBIE and the Department of Conservation (DOC) held a four-week public consultation on 15 May–11 June seeking feedback on proposed changes to the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL), specifically:
 - a. The amount of IVL paid by each eligible traveller.
 - b. How to spend money raised from the IVL across New Zealand.
- 2. We received 1101 submissions in total, including 1011 via an online survey¹ and 90 written submissions.
- 3. Targeted advertising was run on social media throughout the consultation period. This campaign received 153,676 impressions across social media and Google, with an average click-through rate of 2.47%.
- 4. Officials have now analysed these submissions and produced a Draft Summary of Submissions (attached at **Annex One**) and a draft Cabinet Paper (attached at **Annex Two)**.
- 5. You are the responsible Ministers for the conservation and tourism spending for the IVL alongside the Minister of Finance (the IVL Ministers). The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality is responsible for the regulations relating to the level of the IVL. Following your decisions on this paper, we will provide you with papers to seek agreement from the Minister of Finance and then Cabinet.
- 6. This paper provides a summary of key findings of the consultation and advice on next steps.

While there was large public support for a significant increase to the IVL amount, the tourism sector has raised concerns

The unfunded costs of tourism and conservation remain high

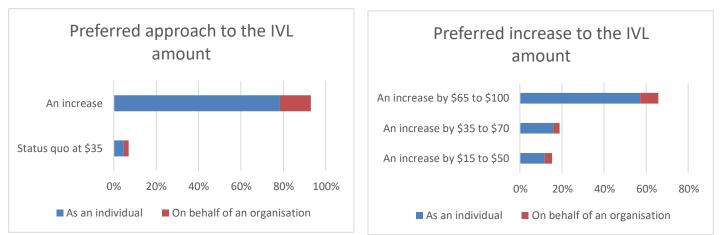
- 7. The discussion document stated a roughly \$250m funding gap for New Zealand's tourism and conservation sectors. This figure was based on previous research carried out by Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) and work carried out by DOC. Since these were calculated, the funding shortfall is likely to be much higher, adjusting for inflation.
- 8. TIA provided comments in their submission, which demonstrated the challenge of quantifying the full range of costs for the Tourism sector. They estimate that tourism's costs alone have risen to \$250m. This includes the previous estimate of \$100m-\$150m based on McKinsey research from 2016 and new data provided by Regional Tourism New Zealand (RTNZ), which estimated the cost to support delivery of Destination Management Plans (DMPs) at around \$130m.

There were strong views on increasing the IVL amount

- 9. The Discussion document sought feedback on four options for the IVL amount:
 - a. Status Quo at \$35.
 - b. An increase of \$15 to \$50.
 - c. An increase of \$35 to \$70.

¹ Not all respondents answered all questions, which will account for variation in percentages.

d. An increase of \$65 to \$100.



- 10. Overall, most respondents preferred an increase of the IVL amount to \$100. However, key tourism stakeholders had some concerns regarding a significant increase.
- 11. Firms and organisations at the border (e.g., Air New Zealand (Air NZ), Qantas, Emirates, Auckland Airport, Christchurch Airport, Wellington Airport, NZ Airports Association, Board of Airline Representatives New Zealand (BARNZ), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Airlines for Australia and New Zealand) argued strongly for no increase. At the same time, those more associated with accommodation and visitor activity within New Zealand advocated for no or only a minor increase in line with CPI, as any larger increase risked making New Zealand too expensive to visit.

Tourism firms and organisations had concerns about the lack of impact data

- 12. Officials did not include elasticity analysis as we do not have an accurate model to estimate impact. Some stakeholders proposed delaying IVL decisions until the completion of accurate modelling.
 - a. Some stakeholders included data from the proactively released (but not consulted on) IVL Discussion Document prepared in 2022. Officials believe this data overestimates the impact on demand because international travel was still recovering from COVID-19, prices were volatile, and several assumptions were made. No new model has been produced.

Commercial Information

- 13. There were also concerns that the Government had not accurately factored in the full range of potential border charges being considered by Government at this time. These were not included as the timing of policy work did not align.
 - a. Both TIA and Air NZ produced a table showing travellers' cumulative costs, providing a useful picture of total cost. We have indicated where we now understand that price changes are likely. See Table One below.

Name of Charge	Australia or Pacific Island Visitor	Visa-Waiver Visitors (60 countries, incl. UK, US, Europe, Japan)	Group visitor Visa (e.g., China, India, South Africa)	Independent Visa (e.g., China, India, South Africa)	Potential Change upcoming
New Zealand electronic Travel Advisory (NZeTA)	-	\$23.00	-	-	
IVL	-	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\checkmark
Border Processing Levy (arrival)	\$19.08	\$19.08	\$19.08	\$19.08	✓
Border Processing Levy (departure)	\$5.20	\$5.20	\$5.20	\$5.20	✓
MPI Biosecurity Levy (arrival)	\$19.46	\$19.46	\$19.46	\$19.46	\checkmark
International Passenger Security Levy	\$15.09	\$15.09	\$15.09	\$15.09	
Civil Aviation (Safety) Levy	\$1.84	\$1.84	\$1.84	\$1.84	
Immigration Visa Fee	-	-	\$55.00	\$190.00	\checkmark
Immigration Levy	-	-	\$55.00	\$21.00	\checkmark
Total	\$60.67	\$118.97	\$205.67	\$306.67	
Total Cost at \$50 IVL	-	\$133.67	\$220.67	\$321.67	
Total Cost at \$70 IVL	-	\$153.67	\$240.67	\$341.67	
Total Cost at \$100 IVL	-	\$183.67	\$270.67	\$371.67	

- 14. Both Air NZ and TIA raised concerns that an increase to the IVL would push entry costs for some visitors to a level that may deter travellers. Air NZ indicated that a single visitor from China to New Zealand would face border costs of \$440.67 with an IVL of \$100. Air NZ suggested this would be the highest rate in the OECD. TIA produced similar figures when factoring in potential visa fee and levy increases.
- 15. Air NZ and TIA felt these costs could dissuade some visitors from travelling to New Zealand. It is unclear what effect such costs have on individual travel decisions, but they are a good indication of how an increase of the IVL cannot be taken in isolation.

Tourism firms and organisations felt other tools were preferable to an increase in the IVL.

- 16. Several comments advocated for the introduction of new tools instead of increases to the IVL. Confidential advice to Government
- 17. Some comments suggested that Government needed to invest more from GST rather than increase the IVL to achieve better outcomes without risking visitor numbers.

18. These comments are outside the scope of the questions in the discussion document but provide useful context for the respondents' views.

The IVL should be set at an amount which is equitable, efficient and can support investment over time

- 19. The amount of the IVL should be set to support broader Government aims, and ensuring the fund can deliver effectively against its objectives.
- 20. The Discussion Document suggested that the current IVL amount was insufficient to address the costs and issues facing the tourism and conservation sector. However, it also made clear that the IVL's purpose is not to cover funding for all these issues fully.
- 21. International tourism does generate unfunded costs for New Zealand, but also generates significant benefits to our economy, communities, and international connections.
- 22. The principle of equity, therefore, suggests that the amount should be one where the amount is appropriate for the costs they impose and the benefits they create. Table Two below shows how much of that cost would be covered by the total amount generated by the IVL at each potential amount.

IVL amount	Status Quo	\$50	\$70	\$100
Revenue Generated (assuming 2019 arrival figures)	~\$80m	~\$115m	~\$161m	~\$230m
Minimum annual unfunded costs from visitors	\$250m	\$250m	\$250m	\$250m
Costs Covered	32% costs covered	46% costs covered	64% costs covered	92% costs covered

Table Two: Percentage of tourism cost covered by potential IVL amounts

- 23. The annual revenue from an increase in the IVL amount to \$100 comes closest to covering the full costs of tourism. However, the IVL is not paid by all visitors as it excludes our largest visitor market of Australia, which represents 43 per cent² of all visitors to New Zealand. An IVL amount of \$100 would see other international visitors covering the funding shortfall from all international visitors.
- 24. By increasing the amount too high, there is a risk of increased inefficiency, where visitors will reduce their spend while in New Zealand to account for the higher cost at the border or will not travel here at all.
- 25. Given the Government's goal of doubling export revenue, it is important that there is minimal impact on visitor arrival and visitor spend.
- 26. International travel is recovering well following COVID-19, at around 82 per cent of annual arrivals. However, it faces a range of challenges in terms of increased travel costs, competition, and challenging global economic conditions. When taken with other price rises at the border, this suggests that a balance is needed between addressing costs and reducing the impact on travellers. Especially with the Government's goal to double exports, tourism growth is critical to that strategy.

² YE Jan 2024 figures 3m total visitors, of which 1.3m were from Australia Source: <u>https://teic.mbie.govt.nz/ste/theEconomy/demand/</u>

- 27. However, it is also critical that the IVL amount is sufficient to ensure adequate funding until the next levy review this means setting an amount which retains spending power against the effects of inflation and cost-of-living changes. Choosing the lowest amount of \$50 is only just over the level suggested by inflation to 2024 (\$42.50). This amount will likely become insufficient quickly as other costs are considered.
- 28. Officials recommend that a range of tools are needed to address the impact of international tourism. The challenge is not just how much money is generated, but where and how it is generated as well. Increasing the IVL significantly at this stage creates the risk that other tools cannot be introduced, or that when such tools are introduced travel to New Zealand becomes overwhelmingly expensive for certain travellers.

We therefore recommend a moderate increase in the IVL amount to \$70

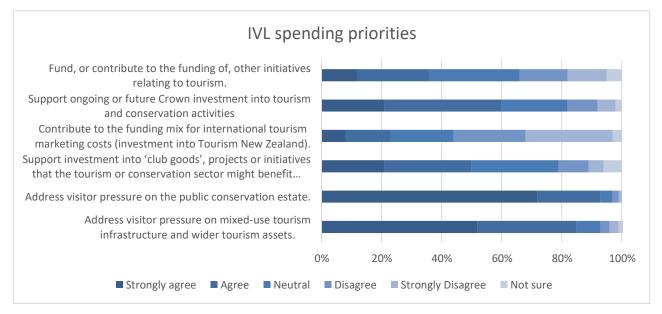
- 29. Assuming arrival figures are like those in 2019, this increase would raise \$160m p/a, an additional \$80m p/a compared to current settings.
- 30. Maintaining the current 50:50 split would result in ~\$80m per annum for tourism and conservation spend, assuming arrival figures similar to 2019.

There was greater agreement on how funding should be spent

The purpose of the IVL

- 31. The IVL intends to allow international visitors to contribute to the costs they create in New Zealand, and for this funding to contribute to a sustainable funding framework to help achieve the government's strategic objectives in tourism and conservation.
- 32. At its introduction, significant feedback was that the funding should be ringfenced and not returned to the consolidated fund. To remain aligned with the fund's intent, spending from the IVL should remain additive to existing government programmes rather than replace them.
- 33. COVID-19 had a significant impact on the fund's operation. It led to its advisory panel meeting only once, and the IVL was spent on an ad-hoc basis to address challenges relating to the closure of the border.
- 34. As the impact of COVID-19 has now significantly reduced there is an opportunity to revisit the IVL's initial goals, with its focus matching feedback from the consultation.

Survey responses



There was strong support for spending on conservation and infrastructure

- 35. These two priority areas reflect the IVL's goal of generating revenue from international visitors to address the unfunded impacts international tourism can have on New Zealand.
- 36. There was a clear preference for spending to focus on conservation and addressing pressure on mixed-use infrastructure and wider tourism assets.
- 37. In particular, respondents felt that spending should address specific pressures at places such as:
 - a. Ensuring ongoing protection of our natural environment and biodiversity.
 - b. Maintenance and upgrades to visitor infrastructure on Public Conservation Land and Water (PCL&W).
 - c. Maintenance and upgrades to mixed-use infrastructure in communities and regions, with some seeking increased funding to support Destination Management plans.
- 38. These responses were often supported by comments which:
 - a. reflected the importance of PCL&W both for tourism and for New Zealanders,
 - b. reflected the pressures felt by local councils in addressing costs from international visitors, particularly in areas with high visitor-to-resident ratios.
- 39. **Officials recommend** that these areas remain the priority for IVL funding and undertaking work to develop proposals for how spending could match these goals.

People felt club goods and tourism marketing should be funded from general taxation

- 40. General market failures across tourism limit firms' ability to coordinate on a large scale to fund certain beneficial activities. This includes funding for 'club goods' and funding for international tourism marketing. Government tends to invest in these areas as they are considered beneficial for the country overall.
- 41. The Discussion Document sought views on whether funding from the IVL could be used to supplement crown investment into these club goods so that the burden on tax and ratepayers was lowered.
- 42. Responders generally did not agree that the IVL should fund Tourism New Zealand (TNZ). Tourism stakeholders were particularly concerned that investment in TNZ was an essential function for the Crown from general taxation. Other stakeholders felt that IVL funding would be better invested elsewhere.
- 43. Funding for TNZ is critical for the ongoing success of the Tourism sector in New Zealand. However, providing IVL funding for TNZ moves the fund further away from its original intent of not duplicating Crown funding and supporting new measures.
- 44. While the survey showed limited engagement on funding for Club Goods, this is more directly in line with the IVL's intent. Investment in Club Goods, such as training programmes, data, and connectivity, could generate system-wide change and would be in addition to the Crown's existing spend.
- 45. **Officials recommend** further developing this proposal by engaging key sector voices.

Support for ongoing or future Crown investment could prove problematic

46. IVL Ministers agreed to seek views from the public on whether to use IVL funding to support Crown spending on tourism and conservation, with no indication that funding would go beyond these priorities.

- 47. Individual submitters emphasised that the IVL should be used in addition to Crown funding and should not be used as a replacement. At the same time, tourism sector voices were concerned that this approach would ultimately result in no additional spend for tourism and conservation from the IVL.
- 48. MBIE has already allocated a significant portion of its IVL funding to projects previously funded by the Crown as part of savings for Budget 2024 (Table Three). If further IVL funding is allocated to Crown funding, the tourism element of the IVL will be severely limited in its effectiveness in delivering any change.

Budget 2024	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
Funding switch for Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trails Great Rides – return of funding	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Tourism New Zealand, Marketing New Zealand as a Visitor Destination – return of funding	145,000	24,000	13,899,000	13,899,000

Table Three: Tourism funding switches for Budget 2024

A range of other spending options were proposed

- 49. Border and aviation organisations (Air NZ, NZ Airports Association, BARNZ, IATA and Wellington and Christchurch airports) felt that IVL funding should direct investment to increase the supply and demand of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). They presented the view that New Zealand will be left behind without additional government support as the industry moves towards greater requirements for SAF as part of the aviation fuel mix. This is in addition to wider benefits such as reduction in Greenhouse Gases, addressing New Zealand's climate targets and supporting broader decarbonisation efforts.
- 50. MBIE considers this proposal warrants further exploration. In the next twenty years, airlines will need to increase SAF uptake substantially in reaction to external pressures (such as legal requirements from international agreements, financial requirements from investors, trade requirements from international jurisdictions, and consumer pressures).
- 51. Some respondents felt that the IVL could be used to finance the introduction of other funding tools (see paragraph 16). This approach would see IVL funding used to invest in large-scale IT systems or similar price-capturing tools to support cost recovery at place. Depending on your views on introducing other pricing tools, this would be an effective use of IVL funding in the short term.
- 52. We received several submissions from organisations associated with the arts, culture, and heritage, which all recommended that a portion of funding be passed to this sector as they are part of New Zealand's tourism offering. Free and frank opinions

There was a general view that better governance of funds was needed.

- 53. Many organisations referred to the lack of governance and transparency in how the IVL has been operated to date. There were calls for greater involvement from tourism and conservation groups in designing criteria for how funding from the IVL is spent.
- 54. **Officials recommend** further work to develop a revised investment plan with specific goals and outcomes in mind.
- 55. **Officials recommend** further work into governance to improve the accountability and transparency of funding priorities.

56. We recommend that both actions are undertaken separately from the Cabinet process on IVL amount decisions. Officials will prepare separate advice to IVL Ministers for decision if you support this direction.

We recommend seeking Cabinet approval for high level framework for IVL investment before making definitive spending decisions

- 57. Officials do not believe seeking Cabinet agreement for spending proposals is necessary. There was a range of helpful feedback to the discussion document, and we feel that taking time will lead to a better overall outcome.
- 58. **Officials recommend** you seek Cabinet agreement to delegate decision-making on final spending decisions to the IVL Ministers.

Budget24 - treatment of the IVL revenue in future years



- 60. Cabinet agreed to the following points prior to the release of the Discussion Document (CBC-24-MIN-0019):
 - a. Any increase to the IVL's rate could generate revenue by an additional ~\$35 million for a rate of \$50 / ~\$81 million for a rate of \$70 / ~\$150 million for a rate of \$100. This will be hypothecated using the current framework.
 - b. Further decisions on the treatment of additional revenue will be required, subject to Budget 2024 decisions. At present, no changes will be made to the IVL Investment Plan 2023 and spending plans as a result of these changes.
- 61. Any change from this position would be a significant shift from what was agreed.

Legislative Programme

- 62. MBIE recommends aligning any changes to the IVL amount with proposed changes to Visa levies and fees being progressed by the Minister for Immigration, as both these changes impact similar groups. Aligning changes will give visitors a clearer picture of cost when making travel decisions.
- 63. Aligning our work programme with Immigration changes creates challenging timings for the Cabinet process (see timeframe section below).
- 64. Under this approach, we propose to include our legislation changes in papers being prepared by the Immigration team for the Cabinet Legislative Committee (LEG) rather than producing a separate paper.

Risks and Mitigations

- 65. Given the large number of responses received through the submission, there is a risk that any decision made will prove divisive, with several of those who contributed likely to feel their views have not been taken on board.
- 66. By publishing the attached summary of submissions, you will be able to demonstrate that all comments were considered before making your decision.

- 67. Tourism and hospitality stakeholders raised some concerns about the IVL-related decisions represented in Budget 2024 (IVL funding to TNZ and NZ Cycle Trails) partway through the consultation. This has raised some concern that decisions were predetermined.
- 68. As highlighted in paragraph 60 no decisions were made on the amount of the IVL prior to Budget 2024, and we recommend working closely with the sector regarding spending decisions.

Timeframes are tight

69. A draft Cabinet Paper is included at **Annex Two** for your comments. There is a tight timeframe for getting this agreed upon by agencies and Ministers before lodgement for ECO on 18 July. **There is no margin for any slippage from this timeline.**

Milestone	Deadline
Decisions on options in this paper and comments on draft Cabinet Paper	24 June
Departmental Consultation on draft Cabinet paper (coinciding with Ministerial consultation)	25 June – 2 July
Ministerial Consultation on draft Cabinet Paper	2 July – 16 July
Final Cabinet Paper for Ministerial agreement	17 July
Cabinet Paper lodged for ECO	18 July
ECO – final Policy Decisions	24 July
Cabinet ratify ECO decisions	29 July
Draft Regulations lodged for LEG	15 August
LEG agree draft regulations	22 August
Cabinet Ratify LEG decisions	26 August
Presentation of regulations to the House of Representatives	1 September
New IVL amount goes live (in line with Immigration changes)	1 October

Next steps

- 70. Following your feedback on the policy decisions and draft Cabinet Paper, MBIE will undertake departmental consultation and provide a final Cabinet paper to your offices and the Minister of Finance before lodging for consideration at ECO on 24 July.
- 71. Once Cabinet has agreed to proposals in that paper, we will work with colleagues in the Immigration Policy team at MBIE to prepare a joint paper for LEG, which will bring into effect any agreed change in the IVL amount. This joint timeframe is important to ensure visitors paying the IVL have one timeframe for the changes to come into effect. Officials will also work with your office for the announcement of final decisions.

Annexes

Annex One: Draft Summary of Submissions

Annex Two: Draft Cabinet Paper

Annex One: Draft Summary of Submissions

Attached as a separate document.

Annex Two: Draft Cabinet Paper

Attached as a separate document.