



4 December 2023

Hon Nicola Willis  
Minister of Finance  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington 6160

By email: [n.willis@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:n.willis@ministers.govt.nz)

Dear Minister,

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS RE “NASTY FINANCIAL SURPRISES” IN GOVERNMENT BOOKS**

1. Congratulations on your appointment. On behalf of our 204,000 subscribed supporters, we wish you all the very best in fulfilling your election mandate of getting public finances back into shape and delivering meaningful tax relief for all working kiwis. In the New Year, we would like to meet with you to discuss areas of mutual interest.
2. We refer to your public comments about concerns relating to the state of the government's finances and public reporting of the same – including the claim there are ‘nasty financial surprises’ that have welcomed the incoming government. Following your comments, we publicly called for either a government inquiry, or select committee inquiry into these matters.<sup>1</sup>
3. As you will appreciate, given its make-up (and Ruth's keen interest in fiscal transparency matters, in particular) my board are extremely concerned and following the matters closely. They have instructed the staff to collate the unfunded/undisclosed liabilities and put them to both the Secretary of the Treasury and the former Minister of Finance to explain. How are we in this situation, and what legislative changes (if any) are necessary to avoid it happening again? Or was this a case of the law not being followed, and public accountability being the best preventative measure? Either way, we want to ensure this happens.
4. Our staff will work through the BIMs once released to collate the information. Nevertheless, if you have officials doing the same (or keeping track of the ‘surprises’) we would certainly appreciate your office sharing this information to avoid duplication, and as an error check.
5. If necessary, we can request the sought information through individual Minister's offices. We would appreciate guidance on the most efficient from the government's perspective, so as to minimise the time required by officials to deal with the request.
6. As you know, it is critical that the public has a transparent view of the nation's accounts, and a clear understanding of New Zealand's liabilities, spending overruns, and what needs to be cut back so that the

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.taxpayers.org.nz/serious\\_allegations\\_from\\_nicola\\_willis\\_require\\_government\\_inquiry](https://www.taxpayers.org.nz/serious_allegations_from_nicola_willis_require_government_inquiry)

nation's books can get back into the black. You can't solve a problem, until you understand it. Similarly, we think it is important the public (and media) understand the challenges faced.

7. Congratulations again, and we look forward to working with you.

Yours faithfully,  
New Zealand Taxpayers' Union Inc.

*P.P. Conrad Mackay*

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