

13 May 2025

Iain Rennie, CNZM  
Secretary and Chief Executive to the Treasury

Dear Secretary,

At 5pm yesterday, the Treasury informed the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi (NZCTU) it has been barred from attending the Budget lock-up on 22 May. This is the first time the NZCTU has been prevented from attending a Budget lock-up in living memory.

We object in the strongest possible terms to the government's decision to bar the NZCTU from Budget 2025. The NZCTU represents over 300,000 workers across the private and public sectors, and the union movement is the largest democratic organisation in New Zealand. These workers will be significantly impacted by the decisions made by government at Budget 2025, which often include legislative changes such as tax reform that are passed under urgency.

The Treasury has not provided any reasons why the NZCTU should not be allowed at the restricted briefing. It has simply stated that the purpose of the lock-up "is to provide advance access to material under embargo. This allows sufficient time to media, and economic and financial organisations, to consider, analyse, and accurately report on materials to the public and the markets when the embargo is lifted".

It is important that the NZCTU can accurately report on Budget decisions to ensure working people are properly briefed. The Budget lock-up is the only opportunity that organisations like the NZCTU will have to directly access Treasury officials and to question the Minister of Finance about spending decisions. This access enables the NZCTU to accurately report on the Budget information.

Regrettably, this government appears to believe the banks, international financial institutions, and consulting houses who will be attending the lock-up are more important than working people, and it seems that is why the representatives of working people have been denied access.

It also appears this government does not want independent scrutiny of its spending decisions. Restricting access during the lock-up means the NZCTU does not get a chance to participate in the immediate post-budget media response, which sets the tone and agenda for subsequent analysis of the Budget. Why should Australian-owned banks be able to ask the Minister of Finance questions about the Budget, but not the representatives of working New Zealanders?

Last week the government made the highly controversial decision to unilaterally end the 33 pay equity claims under negotiation, scrap review clauses in existing settlements, and make it harder to lodge claims in the future. It is perhaps

unsurprising, then, that it doesn't want working people to understand the rationale and impacts of its Budget decisions this year.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Wagstaff

President

**New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi**