

It is now ten years since the enactment of the Public Finance Act 1989. It introduced a new regime of financial management and Parliamentary accountability that was, at the time, without precedent anywhere in the world. The tenth anniversary seems a good time to pause, take stock and perhaps map a way forward. This report has been prepared with that objective in mind.

I am extremely grateful to the many people who gave freely of their time and contributed so constructively to the development of this report. By acknowledging their contribution, I do not mean to imply that they necessarily agree with all the views advanced. The report seeks to raise a number of important and complex issues and to stimulate debate. It would have been remarkable indeed if every person we consulted agreed with everything the report contains. Some have expressed reservations. A few have expressed opposing views on some matters. Nonetheless, I have been encouraged by the number of endorsements – first that these issues are topical and important, and secondly that many of the proposals we make are, at the very at least, worth exploring further.

My particular thanks go to Dr Judith Aitken, the Hon Justice Baragwanath, Dr Roger Blakeley, Dr Alan Bollard, Mr Len Cook, Sir Brian Elwood, Mr Howard Fancy, Mr Derek Gill, Dr Bob Gregory, Dr Arthur Grimes, Ms Susan Hitchiner, Professor Philip Joseph, the Hon Sir Kenneth Keith, Mr Colin Keating, Mr John Lepper, Professor John Martin, Mr David McGee, Mr Peter McKinlay, Professor June Pallot, Dr Mark Prebble, Sir John Robertson, Mr Gerald Scanlan, Ms Suzanne Snively and Dr Alex Sundakov. Their insightful and often detailed comments make it clear that the widespread and forward-looking debate we are seeking to promote has already begun.

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