

Introduction

The contents of this report have been finalised since the general election for members of Parliament on 27 November 1999. The results of the election are now for the most part final and a new government has been sworn in. The new Parliament is expected to have been called together and begun its first session by the time this report is ready for presentation to the House.

The general election has resulted in there being many new members of Parliament. For those members at least, the subjects dealt with in this report are likely to be new. However, the financial activities of the Crown require attention because they are a major feature of the country's economy, and influence the day-to-day affairs of many people and businesses.

The financial activities of the Crown and its sub-entities – government departments, Crown entities, State-owned enterprises, and the Reserve Bank of New Zealand – are summarised each year in the *Financial Statements of the Government of New Zealand*. Those statements and the transactions behind them are subject to audit by the Audit Office.

The Audit Office is also the auditor appointed by Parliament of:

- all government departments;
- most Crown entities and their subsidiaries; and
- all State-owned enterprises and their subsidiaries.

The articles in this report are all on subjects relating to the Crown and its sub-entities. Specifically:

- The first two articles deal with the results of our audits of the 1998-99 *Financial Statements of the Government* and the 1998-99 financial statements of government departments (pages 9-16 and 17-25 respectively).

- The third and fourth articles report on particular matters that were dealt with during the course of those audits (pages 27-36 and 37-47 respectively).
- The fifth article reports the results of a special audit of how the Ministry of Fisheries is gathering the information that it needs to meet its responsibilities under the Fisheries Act 1996 (pages 49-112).

We hope that all members of the House – both first-time and returning – will find this report a useful addition to their understanding of the financial business of the Crown and its associated entities.

