



Keeping cash local - public consultation paper

Money and Cash Directorate

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Consultation
paper

What sort of document is this

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand – Te Pūtea Mātua produces a variety of publications including consultation papers. This paper outlines a proposal to introduce a cash services standard that would apply to banks. We're seeking the public's views on this proposal.

We welcome feedback on the ideas shared in the paper. You can provide feedback in multiple ways. You can respond to questions or provide free text online, you can email us using futureofmoney@rbnz.govt.nz, or you can write to us at Future of Money and Payments, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, PO Box 2498, Wellington 6140.

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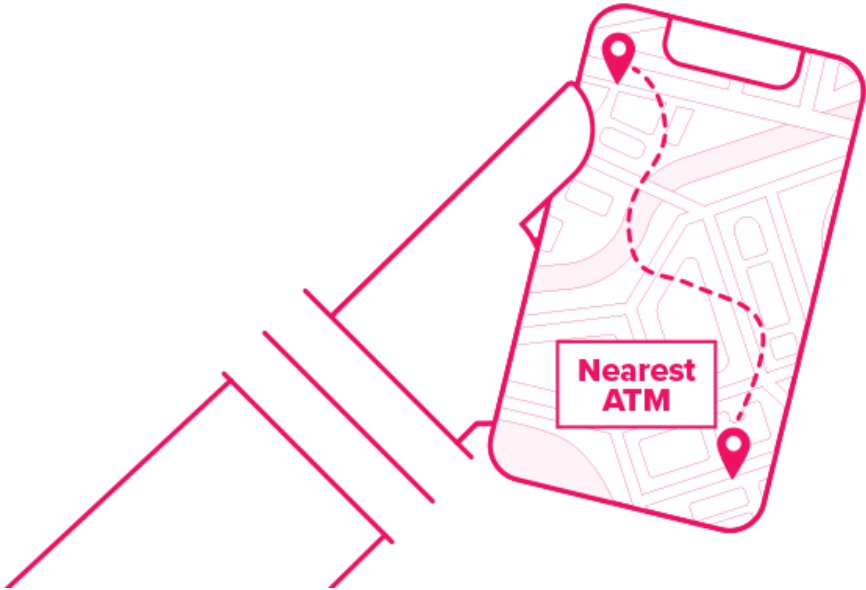
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Keeping cash local – public consultation paper

This consultation seeks public feedback on a proposal to introduce a cash services standard that would apply to New Zealand's banks. The standard would set a floor under the number and location of places where bank customers can withdraw, deposit and swap cash (for example, exchanging a \$50 banknote for \$5 banknotes and coins).

At a high level, the proposed standard would mean:

- Business and personal customers of any registered bank can access cash withdrawal, cash deposit and cash swap services
- Services are free, reliable, and available often
- Services meet basic technical requirements
- Cash services are located close enough to where people live
- There are enough service sites to avoid long waiting times

In this consultation we focus on these last two elements: the location and number of cash services.

Further consultation will be needed to work through further specifics of the standard, including whether it would apply to all banks or just the largest ones and how the standard would be implemented and enforced. We will consult on these matters in due course.

Introduction

Cash matters. It matters now and it will continue to matter in the future. That's the strong message we have heard from New Zealand businesses and communities. You can read about the community research we have recently conducted in the [Litmus - Research on cash use and access in ten rural towns](#).

Cash can only remain a meaningful payments option if cash services are available. Cash services allow people to withdraw, deposit, and swap cash. Cash services can be delivered in-person in a bank branch, via a machine such as an automatic teller machine ('ATM'), or via specialist cash service companies (e.g. those supplying cash collection services).

At one time, bank branches were relied on by communities for all their cash service needs. But in the past decade New Zealand has lost around 40 percent of its bank branches. Where bank branches remain, in many cases their opening hours have been significantly reduced. This seems to be especially true in rural communities.

While ATMs have been introduced to substitute for in-person branch services, often they are limited in what they can do (dispensing cash, for example but not accepting cash deposits or dealing with coins or giving out smaller banknote denominations). Using them also means paying a fee for many people.

This consultation takes forward analysis we shared in November 2021.¹ As well as describing the problems people are experiencing accessing cash services, in the 2021 consultation we explained the significant market failings that are removing New Zealanders' choice to use cash. These include: i) barriers to competition among banks when it comes to providing cash services to customers; ii) dependency on specialist, high-cost equipment among those who supply wholesale services (such as cash authentication, cash transport and cash storage) to banks (meaning the New Zealand market can support only very few firms that supply these services); and complex feedback loops ('network externalities') that amplify the effect of banks reducing their supply of cash services to customers.

Market failures lead to perverse outcomes and policy interventions like regulation are usually required to address them.

The 'keeping cash local' policy proposal outlined here is the first step in the Reserve Bank's policy programme aimed at introducing the necessary policy interventions required to maintain cash as a meaningful payments option for New Zealanders.

Our objective is to ensure New Zealand has a reliable and efficient cash system that supports innovation and inclusion

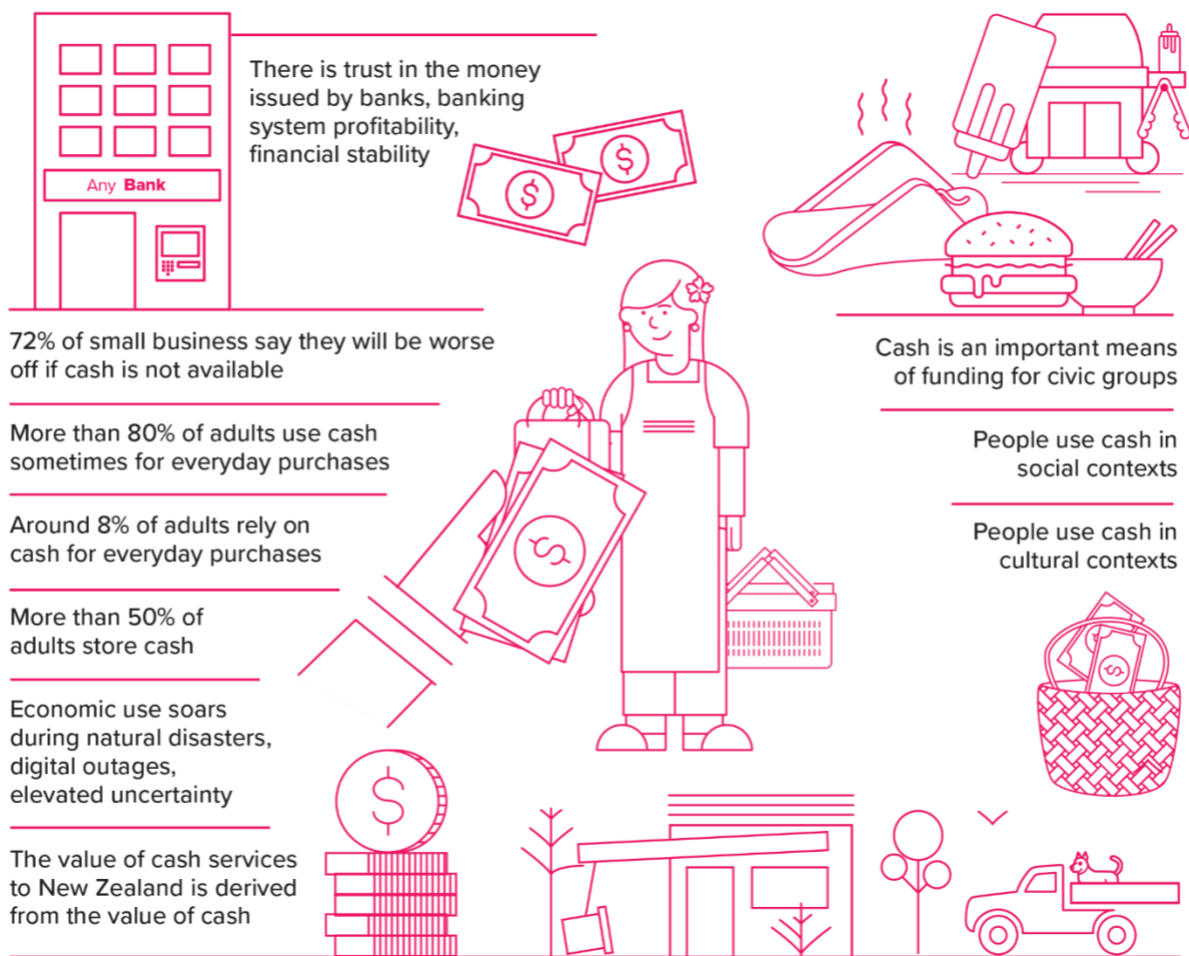
The Reserve Bank is the public agency responsible for cash. One of our functions is ensuring the cash needs of the public are met. That means we are responsible for ensuring communities across New Zealand are well-served when it comes to cash.

Our aim is for New Zealand to have a reliable and efficient cash system that supports inclusion and innovation.

Cash is important for the economy. Precisely because it is so different to digital ways to pay, cash is an important payment option. Sometimes it is the only available option, for example when the card payment system goes offline or transactions happen away from digital payments technology. Cash is important for reasons other than spending too. Parents use cash to teach children about the value of money, and cash is one way people show their appreciation of others. Cash is part of the social and cultural fabric of New Zealand, not just an aspect of the economy.

¹ Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2021) Future of Money – Cash system redesign. www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/project/sites/rbnz/files/consultations/banks/future-of-money/cash-system-redesign-issues-paper.pdf

Figure 1: Cash and cash services contribute to life in New Zealand in many ways²



Cash can only make these contributions to life in New Zealand if businesses and communities can access cash services. Given the importance of cash services in ensuring cash remains a meaningful payments option, the Reserve Bank’s policy focus is on cash services and the entities responsible for supplying them.

We believe banks must provide cash services to customers

We believe the responsibility for providing cash services sits squarely with banks. Providing cash services to their customers is part of a bank’s ‘social licence’ to operate in New Zealand. Providing cash services is an essential element of the relationship banks have with their customers because people expect to be able to convert easily, quickly and without cost, digital money (i.e. their positive balances in their bank transaction accounts) into cash and vice versa. This exchange is known as ‘convertibility’. ‘Convertibility’ is a long-established convention in banking, and in many ways the foundation of what it means to be a bank.

² The findings about small businesses are sourced from an external study: Xero NZ (2024) Cards and convenience reign supreme in Aotearoa, www.xero.com/nz/media-releases/cards-convenience-reign-supreme-aotearoa/. All other data reported in Figure 1 comes from Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2024), Cash Use Survey 2023: www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/project/sites/rbnz/files/notes-and-coins/future-of-cash/2023-cash-use-survey-summary-report.pdf

Banks also benefit financially from providing cash services to customers. Banks' profits are enhanced when a sizeable portion of bank funding is provided at zero (or very low) interest. This funding is provided by the balances held in bank transaction accounts and the amount is substantial (we estimate the retail banking sector to have around \$110 billion of this type of funding). Customers' willingness to hold balances in these accounts reflects their expectation that convertibility exists and their high level of trust in cash (the most trusted form of money).

There is a risk-related benefit for banks from providing cash services to customers too. When banks remove cash service sites from communities, they risk undermining the public's confidence they can access their money in a non-digital form easily and quickly. Such a loss of confidence could lead to behavioural change such as more frequent emptying of bank accounts, which risks increasing the volatility of bank funding. At the extreme this could result in an entity experiencing a crisis (as seen in the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2009).

We're proposing a cash services standard that would apply to banks

We are proposing to make New Zealand's banks subject to a minimum standard for cash services. The standard would apply to services that allow people to withdraw, deposit, and swap cash.

There are several aspects of cash services we would address in the standard.

Given the convertibility obligation banks have to customers, and that banks benefit from providing cash services, we believe customers should be able to access cash services at no charge. Hence, one important element of our proposed cash services standard is that banks cannot charge customers for cash services.

There are other important service aspects too. Cash is a physical product. At some point service users must deliver cash to, or collect cash from, a place where cash services are provided. The distance to the service site and the likelihood of queuing are important aspects of the service. These elements – distance and queuing – are the focus of this public consultation. We will consult later on other aspects of the cash services standard.

Multi-bank, full-service cash sites are a key concept for the proposal

We think the most efficient way to meet minimum access standards is likely to be a 'multi-bank, full-service cash site'. What this means is a site where cash services are offered to customers of any bank and all three types of cash service – cash withdrawals, cash depositing, and cash swapping (swapping high denomination banknotes for low denomination banknotes and coins) are provided there. So, we have used this concept as a basis for this consultation.

Right now, across New Zealand, there are only five multi-bank, full-service cash sites, and even these are not truly 'multi-bank' as only customers of ANZ, ASB, BNZ, Kiwibank, TSB, and Westpac can use them. These are the five NZBA 'regional banking hubs' located in Martinborough, Ōpōtiki, Twizel, Waimate and Whangamatā.³

The remaining cash service sites available currently across New Zealand are partial service sites – they may dispense cash but not accept deposits or allow cash swapping, or they may do all these things but only be accessible to account holders at the bank providing the service.

³ New Zealand Banking Association (2023), Banks launch three new hubs in regional banking trial. <https://nzba.org.nz/banks-launch-three-new-hubs-in-regional-banking-trial/>

We articulate the proposed standard using the concept of multi-bank, full-service cash sites, as it seems to us that this would be the most cost-effective way for banks to comply. However, banks would be free to comply in other ways. For example, banks may prefer to act on their own to meet the standard, putting services in place but only for their own customers. If banks opted to meet the standard by providing services individually – *not* sharing facilities as is envisaged in the ‘multi-bank, full-service cash site’ concept – significantly more cash sites would be required overall than what we indicate in the district maps. But, for branding purposes, this may be something that banks prefer across the country, or in certain locations.

Our focus is on establishing minimum cash access for New Zealanders, so if banks voluntarily went beyond the minimum, we would see that as further enhancing New Zealanders’ access to cash, and therefore a good thing.

The cash services standard would have minimum requirements for the number and location of bank-funded cash services

We’re proposing that banks be made responsible for achieving the following outcomes:

- There are enough cash service sites across New Zealand to prevent lengthy queues.
 - This means there must be at least 2.5 multi-bank, full-service cash sites per 10,000 people or the equivalent using partial service sites (significantly more service sites than 2.5 per 10,000 would be required if banks choose to meet the standard using partial service sites).
- Most people (defined as 95 percent of people) living in an urban area will face only a walkable distance to free-to-use cash withdrawal, free-to-use cash deposit and free-to-use cash swap services.
 - ‘urban’ refers to places where 1,000 or more people live in close proximity.
 - ‘walkable’ refers to no more than a 3km one-way journey.
- Most people (defined as 95 percent of people) living in a rural area will only face a reasonable driving distance to free-to-use cash withdrawal, free-to-use cash deposit and free-to-use cash swap services.
 - ‘rural settlement’ refers to places where 200 to 999 people live in close proximity.
 - ‘living remotely’ refers to people not living in a rural settlement or urban area.
 - ‘reasonable driving distance’ refers to no more than a 15km one-way journey for people living in rural settlements and no more than a 30km one-way journey for people living remotely.

Compliance with the standard would be assessed at the Territorial Authority area level. For ease of reading, throughout the public consultation we use ‘district’ to mean a Territorial Authority area.

While the standard would apply in every district, we acknowledge that variations to a ‘one-size-fits-all’ standard might be warranted in some cases (‘exceptions’). Exceptions would allow for a variation to the standard to reflect unique circumstances for the district. For example, the district might need more service sites than the standard would otherwise deliver because tourists flock to the district in summer.

One potential consequence of a flexible approach that allowed exceptions would be that the policy regimes may be more expensive to administer.

We have prepared district maps to illustrate the potential implications of the proposed standard

The implications of the proposed service standard will vary by district, reflecting differences in population size and settlement patterns. This might make it difficult for some people to assess the proposal. Hence, we have translated the proposed standard into potential multi-bank, full-service cash site footprints, one for each district in New Zealand.

The maps show one potential cash services footprint for each district if banks choose to use multi-bank, full-service cash sites to meet their obligations under the standard. If banks choose to meet their obligations individually, significantly more cash sites will be required than are indicated in the maps.

In theory, depending on the population and occupation patterns within a district, there may be many potential footprints that could meet the standard. In other words, these maps show one way of meeting the minimum cash service requirements in each district. Actual locations will be based on implementation decisions made by banks.

As we're satisfied that the district footprint maps we share in the companion paper, [Keeping cash local - district maps](#), comply with the proposed standard and would deliver adequate access to cash services for New Zealand.

We have created an illustrative footprint map for every district in New Zealand (but not the Chatham Islands).

Care is needed when comparing the future service footprint with current services

Alongside each district map we report the number of multi-bank, full-service cash sites we assess to be compatible with the standard, and also how many partial service sites that district has currently (as indicated by our current data).⁴ Our data on current services has some limitations as it only captures bank branches provided by the 5 largest banks and assumes all bank branches provide cash services.⁵ However our data does include every ATM in New Zealand.⁶

Considerable care is needed to meaningfully compare these two numbers. It's not straightforward because a multi-bank, full-service cash site is fundamentally different to the partial service sites that characterise each district today.

However, we know that making a before-and-after comparison will be important for many people.

The most accurate way to do a before-and-after comparison is to systematically identify the partial services available today and then compare these to the footprint of multi-bank, full-service cash sites we found to be compatible with the standard. We illustrate how to do this below using the Tararua district as our example.

⁴ This data is supplied to the Reserve Bank by the 5 largest banks (ANZ, ASB, BNZ, Westpac and Kiwibank) and ATM providers NCR Atleos and Next Payments Limited.

⁵ We include Kiwibank's local agents as 'bank branches' in these figures.

⁶ We do not include ATMs where cash is exchanged for crypto assets such as Bitcoin.

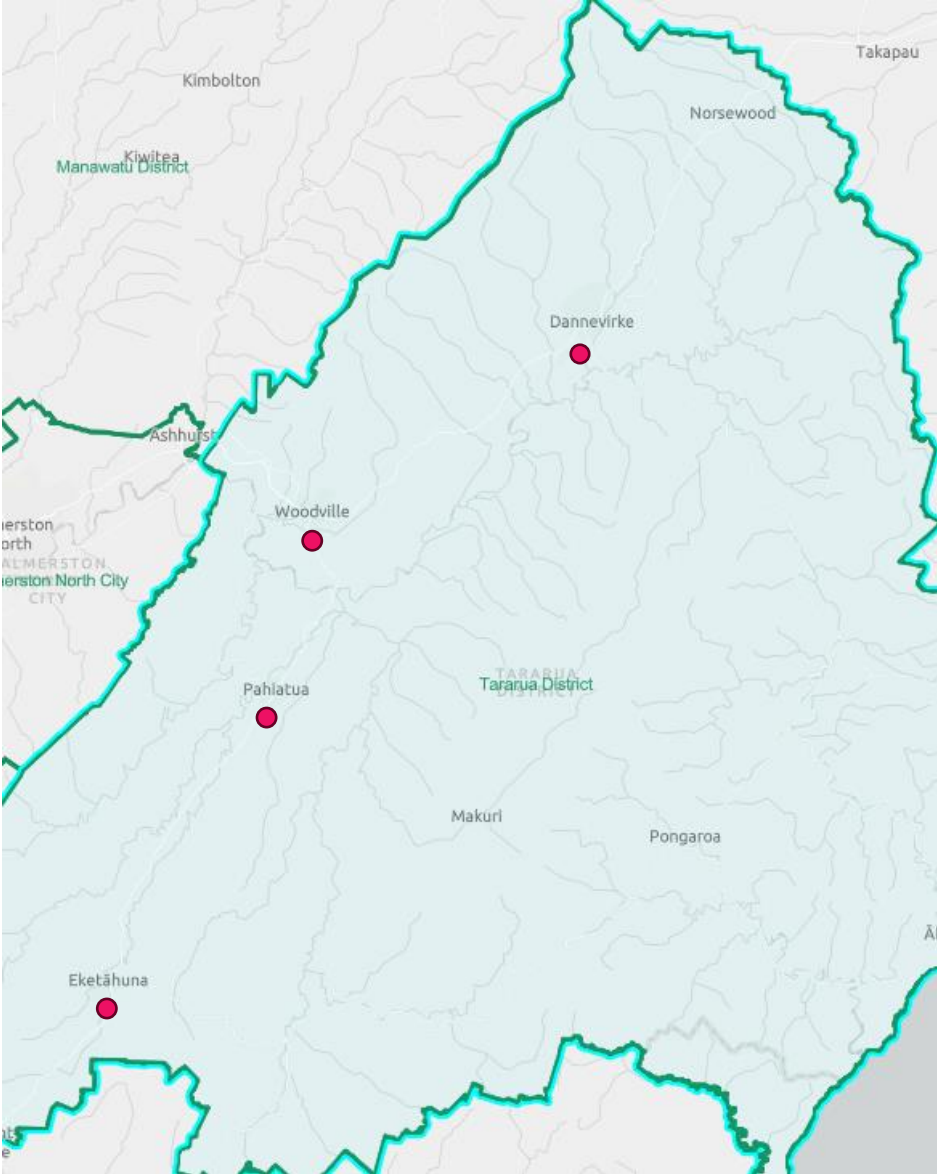
Tararua district

Tararua district has a population of 17,955.

Data available to us suggests the district currently has 17 partial service sites. These consist of 2 bank branches, 1 Kiwibank agent, and 5 bank ATMs existing independently of bank branches (a further 2 ATMs are incorporated within a bank branch and we include them in the bank branch service site). There are also 9 non-bank ATMs (users of these potentially face fees). Note our earlier caveat though - our data only captures bank branches provided by the 5 largest banks, and some bank branches may not provide cash services.

The geospatial tool we have used to illustrate our proposed standard indicates a total of 5 multi-bank, full-service cash sites would be required for the district.

Figure 2: Geospatial tool output for Tararua district



On the face of it, if banks choose to move from 17 partial service sites to 5 multi-bank, full-service sites, this seems likely to reduce the district's access to cash services. However, we assess the move to be a marked improvement in access to cash deposit services, and by association access to cash swap services which – if they are supplied at all – currently tend to be supplied alongside deposit services. And we assess the standard as maintaining the district's access to free-to-use cash withdrawal services.

Bank customers wanting to deposit cash in the district currently have at most two sites where they can access this service (they can only use their own's bank's service sites). Under the cash services standard any bank customer would have an option of 5 sites. Bank customers wanting to withdraw cash without paying a user charge currently have 5 sites available to them. They would continue to have 5 sites under the cash services standard.

The standard does not preclude non-banks continuing to provide pay-to-use cash services, alongside free-to-use bank provided services, and the 9 current non-bank cash sites may or may not remain in the event the cash services standard is introduced.

Moreover, retailers in the district will be more able to provide cash-out services to customers because *their* access to the services needed to support this activity (cash swap and deposit services) would have improved ('cash-out' refers to retailers dispensing cash to customers who pay for the cash using their bank payment card).

Table 1 below presents the information we used to make the before-after comparison for the Tararua district.

Table 1: Comparing a service footprint that complies with the standard with services available today - Taranua district

| | Present day partial cash service sites in Taranua district | | | | | Under RBNZ cash services standard | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Access to cash deposit services | Dannevirke | Woodville | Pahiatua | Eketahuna | Total district | Dannevirke | Woodville | Pahiatua | Eketahuna | Total district |
| - ANZ customers | x1 bank ATM and branch | | | | x1 | x2 multi-bank, full-service cash sites | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x5 |
| - ASB customers | | | | | | | | | | |
| - BNZ customers | x1 bank ATM | | x1 bank ATM | x2 | | | | | | |
| - Westpac customers | x1 bank ATM and branch | | | x1 | | | | | | |
| - Kiwibank customers | | | x1 Kiwibank Agent | x1 | | | | | | |
| - other | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total all customers | x3 | | x2 | | x5 | | | | | x5 |
| Access to cash withdrawal services | Dannevirke | Woodville | Pahiatua | Eketahuna | Total district | Dannevirke | Woodville | Pahiatua | Eketahuna | Total district |
| - customers of big 4, Kiwibank, other small banks | x2 bank ATMs (incl. one stand-alone deposit-accepting ATM from above) | x1 bank ATM | x2 bank ATMs (incl. one stand-alone deposit-accepting ATM from above) | | x5 | x2 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x1 multi-bank, full-service cash site | x5 |
| | x5 non-bank ATMs | x1 non-bank ATM | x2 non-bank ATMs | x1 non-bank ATM | x9 | | | | | |
| Total all customers | x7 | x2 | x4 | x1 | x14 | | | | | x5 |
| Total cash service sites (after acknowledging x2 ATMS allow both withdrawals and deposits) | | | | | x17 | | | | | x5 |

Nationwide comparison

While less valuable than district-level comparisons, for completeness we provide nationwide comparisons in Table 2. Table 2 shows that banks currently provide 5 multi-bank, (more-or-less) full-service cash sites. Based on our geospatial tool's scenario, and our assumption that banks would respond to the cash services standard using multi-bank, full-service cash sites, the standard would lead to 1,293 such sites.

At the other extreme, if banks choose to meet the standard using multiple partial service sites, rather than multi-bank, full-service cash sites, the banking sector would need to provide far more than 1,293 cash service sites. For example, if the standard only applied to the large four banks, and each of the large four opted to provide full cash services but only on an individual bank basis, each bank would need 1,293 such sites. Adding together all four banks, this would equate to 5,172 bank-provided partial cash service sites nationwide. In practice we expect an outcome somewhere between these two extremes.

Table 2: Current and potential future nationwide cash services footprint

| | Present day | Cash services standard: If banks comply using multi-bank, full-service cash sites | Cash services standard: If banks comply by providing full services individually (large 4 banks only) |
|--|---|---|--|
| # of multi-bank, full-service cash sites (customers of any bank can access any type of cash service (withdraw, deposit, swap) without charge. | 5 ⁷ | 1,293 at a minimum | 0 (unless the x5 NZBA regional banking hubs are retained) |
| - of which bank branches | NZBA hubs combine in-person services and ATMs | The standard could prescribe in-person services at some or all sites | |
| - of which ATMs | | | |
| # of bank-owned partial service sites (sites where some type of cash service is provided to some bank customers) | 2,159 ⁸ | Unknown - such services would be based on a profit model and provided in addition to what is required by the standard | 1,293 x 4 = 5,172, (assumes the standard only applies to the large 4 banks) |
| - of which bank branches | 616 | | |
| - of which ATMs | 1,543 | | |

⁷ Currently this service is limited to customers of 6 banks: TSB, Kiwibank, ANZ, ASB, BNZ and Westpac.

⁸ KPMG (2025) Financial Institutions Performance Survey. <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/nz/pdf/2025/03/fips-banks-2024.pdf>

| | Present day | Cash services standard: If banks comply using multi-bank, full-service cash sites | Cash services standard: If banks comply by providing full services individually (large 4 banks only) |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| # of other partial service sites (ATMs that are owned by non-banks) (sites where some type of cash service is provided to some bank customers) | Between 1,500 and 1,600 ⁹ | Unknown - such services would be based on a profit model and supplied in addition to what is required by the standard | Unknown - such services would be based on a profit model and supplied in addition to what is required by the standard |

We have quantified the impacts, and estimate the benefits to exceed the costs

We have considered costs as we have designed this part of our proposal. As a general rule, the more cash service sites there are, the greater the potential cost to banks and, since we assume banks will try to pass on those costs, to New Zealand more generally. Hence, there is a limit to how many cash service sites we should require as part of the cash services standard. On balance, we think the 'rules' we have come up with achieve a good level of service without imposing unreasonable costs on New Zealand.

Impact on banks' operating costs

In terms of costs, our interest is on the economic impacts of the new costs faced by banks. This means we only explore the costs associated with setting up and operating a larger cash services footprint. We set aside a second type of cost impact – no longer being able to charge cash-related fees because - in terms of economic impacts there is an offset. Money that would have been spent on fees remains in people's pockets, having an effect like a boost in income. Reduced bank fee income might have an upward impact on interest rates and thus an adverse impact on the economy but higher household income would, all else held equal, have an opposing, positive effect on the economy.

We estimate that complying with the standard will increase costs for banks in aggregate (i.e. when all banks' cost impacts are added together) by \$104 million a year. More information is provided in our background paper, [Keeping cash local - additional background material](#) released as part of this consultation.

⁹ This information is supplied to the Reserve Bank by ATM providers NCR Atleos and Next Payments Limited.

Economic impact of increased banking sector costs

To put the \$104 million per annum cost increase in perspective, in 2025 the banking sector as whole earned in excess of \$10 billion per annum in pre-tax profit.¹⁰ The \$104 million in new costs represents 1 percent of this combined annual profit.

Another way to consider the \$104 million cost increase is to assess how it might impact interest rates. The banking sector currently has around \$570 billion in net loans and advances.¹¹ If banks were able to recover this cost in full by increasing the lending rate margin, the impact would be on average a 1.8 basis-point increase for each year relative to what it would otherwise have been (e.g. a lending rate would go from 4.5% to 4.518%).

In our view this is a very modest cost for New Zealand. We do not envisage any material impact on the level of credit-funded investment from an average 1.8 basis-point increase in lending rate margins.

Any competition among banks, or between banks and other institutions, would constrain the ability of individual banks to increase the lending rate margin. So, the margin increase would likely be even less than this.

Even if the impact on lending rates was noticeable – i.e. much more than 1.8 basis points – we would say that is an acceptable outcome. Our rationale is that banks are currently avoiding costs they should, in fact, bear. That means the prices they charge customers for non-cash services – for example, lending rates – are currently mispriced as they do not reflect all the costs banks should bear in providing those non-cash services.

We estimate that the benefits significantly outweigh the costs

In terms of benefits, we acknowledge that a viable cash system needs more than a cash service standard. It also depends on the Reserve Bank having an effective, efficient cash operation (responsible for the procurement, quality testing, sorting and bulk storage of the Crown's cash assets) and the Reserve Bank being effective in administering the standard and any other necessary cash-related regulation. While we can estimate the benefits attributable to cash *per se*, we cannot attribute all these benefits to the cash services standard alone.

Our approach is to quantify the benefits attributable to cash *per se* and deduct from this the benefits attributable to the Reserve Bank's cash operations and effective administration of cash-related regulation. We use the estimated costs of delivering the Reserve Bank's cash operations and regulation administration as proxies for these benefits.

Quantifying the benefits generated by cash *per se* is not straightforward. On the one hand, the things we can easily measure aren't necessarily a good representative of the positive impacts of cash. And on the other hand, the concepts we think best capture the positive impacts of cash aren't easy to measure.

¹⁰ Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Financial Strength Dashboard (2025), Profitability.
<https://bankdashboard.rbnz.govt.nz/profitability>

¹¹ This does not include holdings of debt securities, derivatives in an asset position or repos. Refer Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Financial Strength Dashboard (2025), Balance sheet. <https://bankdashboard.rbnz.govt.nz/balance-sheet>

Starting with what we can easily measure, cash contributes to government revenue ('seigniorage'). In 2025 this was included in our Annual Report as \$397 million per annum.¹² Moving onto the productivity benefits of cash for small businesses, we estimate these to be \$600 million per annum. We looked at research that measured the impact on New Zealand's businesses of large changes in the business environment and adapted their findings to come up with an estimated reduction in annual economic output in the event New Zealand became cashless.

Finally, while we think the wellbeing impact on the 80 percent plus of people that use cash sometimes is arguably the most important element of the benefits of cash, it is also the most difficult to quantify. We approached measurement in two ways. As part of other research, we asked people what they would be prepared to pay to have cash. This produced an estimated benefit of \$437 million per annum. An alternative exercise involved carefully considering the aspects of people's lives most impacted by cash, referring to New Zealand's results in the international self-reported wellbeing ('Happiness') surveys that have been produced annually since 2012, and quantifying the potential impacts using Treasury's cost benefit tools designed for this purpose. This analysis indicates cash *per se* generates wellbeing benefits of \$2.9 billion per annum.

Seigniorage, output and wellbeing impacts are each a distinct type of benefit and so should be added together to arrive at an overall estimate of the benefits of cash. In other words, the benefits attributable to cash are much greater than any single estimate we present here. However, in the interests of being conservative, we present our estimates of each benefit individually, as if each is the only benefit cash creates.

In every case, to arrive at an estimate of the benefits of the cash services standard we deduct from the estimated benefits of cash *per se* the benefits created by the Reserve Bank's cash operations and regulation administration (we estimate these as around \$70 million per annum).¹³

As shown in Table 3, even the benefit with the smallest estimated value exceeds the estimated cost by a significant amount.

In the technical paper, [Keeping cash local - technical paper \(considering the benefits of cash\)](#) released as part of this consultation we provide more details about how we grappled with the challenge of quantifying the benefits of cash *per se*.

¹² Reserve Bank of New Zealand (2025), Annual Report 2024/25 [RBNZ Annual Report 2024/25](#), Source: Note 19 to the Financial Statements

¹³ Our estimate for the annual cost of the Reserve Bank's cash operations reflects estimated costs related to staff, the maintenance of (and where necessary upgrades related to) plant, equipment and infrastructure, security related costs, and corporate overheads. Our estimate for the annual cost of the Reserve Bank's administration of cash-related administration captures the costs of monitoring as well as enforcing regulations.

Table 3: Summary of costs and benefits

| Benefit | Estimated value of cash <i>per se</i>, \$ million per annum | Estimated value of cash services standard, \$ million per annum ¹⁴ |
|--|--|--|
| Seigniorage | \$397 million p.a. | \$327 million p.a. |
| Productivity benefits for small businesses | \$600 million p.a. | \$530 million p.a. |
| Impact on wellbeing – | | |
| • ‘willingness to pay’ (not a formal willingness to pay study) OR | \$437 million p.a. | \$367 million p.a. |
| • monetising impacts on the 80 percent of people aged 5 and above who use cash sometimes ¹⁵ | OR \$2.9 billion p.a. | OR \$2.83 billion p.a. |
| Compared to: | | |
| Costs attributable to the cash services standard | | \$104 million p.a. |

¹⁴ We deduct \$70 million per annum from each benefit estimate to account for benefits attributable to the Reserve Bank’s cash operations and administration of cash-related regulation.

¹⁵ If, instead, we assume only those aged 18 and older are impacted by the absence of cash, 80% of this group equates to 3.3 million people impacted. This reduction in the estimated impacted population flows through directly to the estimated wellbeing impact, reducing the estimated wellbeing benefit from cash *per se* from \$2.9 billion per annum to \$2.4 billion per annum.

Feedback questions

Thank you for taking the time to submit your feedback. Your views help shape our understanding of the issues facing New Zealand and inform our thinking about possible solutions.

All the questions in this survey are optional, so feel free to skip any that you'd prefer not to answer.

If you want to provide any extra comments, you can do that at the end.

Once complete please either scan and email to futureofmoney@rbnz.govt.nz, or post to us at

Future of Money and Payments

Money and Cash

Reserve Bank of New Zealand

PO Box 2498

Wellington 6140

If you would prefer to provide feedback directly online, either scan the QR code or please visit <https://consultations.rbnz.govt.nz/rbnz/access-to-cash>



Feedback closes 31 July 2026.

Questions for users of cash services (e.g. businesses, community groups, individuals)

Your views on the current cash services

In this consultation we talk about cash services. Cash services are services that help you to deposit cash into your bank account, take cash out, or swap cash to get a different mix of banknotes and coins.

Cash services can be provided in different ways, such as:

- by staff in a bank branch or an agent
- through machines, like ATMs
- by cash service companies that pick up or deliver cash

Q1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the level of cash services in your district?

--- circle one ---

1 – Very dissatisfied (the services are poor)

2 – somewhat dissatisfied (services are below average)

3 – Neutral (services are average)

4 – Somewhat satisfied (services are good)

5 – Very satisfied (services are excellent)

Don't know

Q2 On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the level of cash services in New Zealand?

- circle one ---
- 1 – Very dissatisfied (the services are poor)
- 2 – somewhat dissatisfied (services are below average)
- 3 – Neutral (services are average)
- 4 – Somewhat satisfied (services are good)
- 5 – Very satisfied (services are excellent)
- Don't know

Q3 How important are each of these features of a cash service?

Rate each feature from 1 to 5 using the following scale:

- 1 – Not at all important
- 2 – Slightly important
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Moderately important
- 5 – Very important

--- circle one ---

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| How far you need to travel to use the service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| How long you have to wait in a queue | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It's free to use | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Having staff on hand to assist you | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Being able to use the service during business hours | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Being able to use the service outside business hours, including weekends and public holidays | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Are there any other features that are important to you?

The next few questions ask for your views on the cash services standard we propose in our consultation document.

A cash services standard is a way to set requirements on banks about the cash services they provide across New Zealand.

We talk about what we think this should cover in our keeping cash local: public consultation paper. You can download the paper at <https://consultations.rbnz.govt.nz/rbnz/access-to-cash> or scan the QR code.



Q4 On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you agree that New Zealand needs a cash services standard?

--- circle one number ---

- 1 – Strongly disagree 4 – Agree
- 2 – Disagree 5 – Strongly agree
- 3 – Neutral Don't know

How far should people travel to access cash services?
Our standard is designed to make sure people and businesses don't have to travel too far to access cash services, and that each district has enough cash services for its population.
We've created maps for each district showing a possible way this could look in your area.
As part of the standard, we are suggesting that for every 10,000 people in a community, banks must provide access to 2.5 cash service sites that:

- can be used by customers of any bank (multi-bank), and
- allow people to withdraw, deposit, and swap cash

Banks can also choose different ways to provide cash services, but whatever they do, access must be just as good as in our example illustrated in the maps.

You can view the maps online at <https://consultations.rbnz.govt.nz/rbnz/access-to-cash> or through the QR code to the above.

Q5 Do you agree that most people (95%) living in rural areas should only have to travel up to 15km (or up to 30km if living outside rural settlements) to access cash services?

--- circle one number ---

- 1 – Strongly disagree 4 – Agree
- 2 – Disagree 5 – Strongly agree
- 3 – Neutral Don't know

Q6 Do you agree that most people (95%) living in urban areas (cities and towns of 1000 or more people) should only have to travel up to 3 km to access cash services?

--- circle one number ---

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 – Strongly disagree | 4 – Agree |
| 2 – Disagree | 5 – Strongly agree |
| 3 – Neutral | Don't know |

Q7 Do you support our proposal of having 2.5 cash service sites for every 10,000 people?

--- circle one number ---

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 – Strongly disagree | 4 – Agree |
| 2 – Disagree | 5 – Strongly agree |
| 3 – Neutral | Don't know |

How well does the overall proposal meet the needs for cash services?

Q8 Do you think people and businesses in your district will have enough access to cash services under this proposal?

--- tick one ---

- Not enough
- About right
- Too much
- Don't know

Please explain why you gave that rating.

Q9 Do you think people and businesses across New Zealand will have enough access to cash services under this proposal?

--- tick one ---

- Not enough Too much
 About right Don't know

Please explain why you gave that rating.

**Q10 Should there be different rules for some rural settlements, towns or parts of a city?
For example, should busy tourist towns have more cash services than what we are proposing in our standard.**

--- tick one ---

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q11 What factors should we think about when deciding whether a rural settlement, town, or part of a city needs a different level of cash service than the usual standard?

--- You can tick more than one ---

- How many people live in the rural settlement, town or part of the city
 How many people live in the wider area
 How many businesses operate in the community
 How far it is to the next town with cash services
 How important tourism is to the local economy
 Community characteristics (for example: average age, income, or ethnicity)
 How much it costs to provide the service there
 There shouldn't be any exceptions

Other (please write your answer)

General feedback

Q12 Is there anything else you'd like to share about cash in New Zealand?

Q13 How would you describe where you currently live?

--- tick one ---

- Rural (in a rural settlement)
- Rural (outside a rural settlement)
- Urban area in a town
- Urban area in a city
- None of these
- Do not wish to answer

Questions for suppliers of cash services

We also welcome feedback from banks, cash-in-transit service suppliers, non-bank owners of ATMs and other cash-related service suppliers.

After this public consultation concludes, we will consult again, focusing on what banks the standard applies to, and the detailed design and implementation options for all aspects of a minimum cash service standard. In the meantime, we welcome your feedback on any aspect of the proposal outlined in this public consultation.