

government  
**economics**  
network

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Annual  
**Report**  
2019

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# About GEN

The Government Economics Network (also known as GEN) provides a professional forum for learning, development and networking.

GEN aims to cater to economists and non-economists in both the public and private sectors.

GEN has a vision to improve policy through better economic analysis and advice. We achieve this by:

- strengthening economic capability,
- utilising economists more effectively, and
- encouraging the use of economics at a broader level.

GEN runs a range of seminars, training, conferences and social events throughout the year to encourage the use of economics in public policy decision making and to stimulate debate and discussion on economic and public policy research.

GEN was established in 2011 and has operated independently of Government since 2013.

GEN is an incorporated society and registered charity.

Membership is free and open to all.

# Chair's Report

It is my pleasure to present the Chair's report for 2018/19.

The Government Economics Network (GEN) aims to raise economics capability in the New Zealand public sector. We do this by providing training courses, conferences and other networking events.

The GEN Committee has two main roles. First, it has a governance role by ensuring GEN, as an incorporated society and a registered charity, meets its legal obligations. Second, it organises the events that contribute to achieving GEN's aims.

## ***Governance***

The Committee has spent a lot of time this year understanding its governance responsibilities and building our capabilities. This included conducting a governance audit to ensure our rules and processes are consistent with changing legislation and best practice. As a result of this exercise, the Committee has recommended updating GEN's constitution, which will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. Over the coming year GEN will make other changes to its systems and processes, including improving our membership records.

## ***Training courses***

During 2018/19 we ran 10 training courses on microeconomics, macroeconomics, behavioural economics, cost-benefit analysis, environmental economics, and New Zealand economics history. Reflecting strong demand, the microeconomics course was held three times, while the behavioural economics and cost-benefit analysis courses were held twice. For the first time, we held our microeconomics and behavioural economics courses in Auckland. Overall, 186 people attended these courses.

## ***Conference***

The 2018 GEN conference on 'Improving people's lives through effective policy' was very successful with 214 participants. The conference brought together speakers from overseas, like Lord Gus O'Donnell, Professor Stephen Jenkins and Professor Allan McConnell, and from New Zealand. It provided a forum for sharing international and domestic perspectives.

## ***Networking events***

GEN ran two networking events during 2018/19 covering a range of topics. More recently GEN has held events on 'Better and fairer measures of school quality' and 'Who's going to win the 2019 Rugby World Cup'.

## ***Financial position and membership***

GEN's financial position is strong, as reflected in our audited financial statements. Our training courses remain an important source of revenue for GEN, which helps us to cover our operating expenses, hold networking events and allow us to bring high-quality international speakers to our annual conference.

GEN has over 1600 people on its distribution list and plans to improve its membership records over the coming year.

### ***Acknowledgements***

GEN would not succeed without the time and effort put in by the Committee members and so I would like to thank them for their ongoing support and dedication to GEN and its aims. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by previous Committee members, Peter Bailey, Dr Marcos Pelenur, Dr Patrick Nolan, Professor Girol Karacaogolu and Zaneta Waitai who have stepped down since last year's Annual Meeting.

I would also like to thank the training course presenters for sharing their experiences of applying economics to a policy context. Finally, I would like to thank the government agencies that generously support GEN by making the time of Committee members and training course presenters available and by providing venues for training and seminars.

Mark Lea, Chair

# Financial Statements

## Statement of Income and Expenditure

For period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	31 March 2019 (12 months)
<b>Income</b>	
Conference income	38,222
Training course/seminar fees	82,100
Other income (interest)	2,354
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>122,676</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Employee related costs	34,096
Costs related to providing goods or services -	
Accounting services fees	688
Bank fees	133
Conference expenses	25,115
Training course/seminar fees	23,596
Website development and hosting	3,689
Others (incl. entertainment, printing and stationery)	1,419
Other expenses (audit fee and depreciation and bad debt)	
Audit fee	1,148
Bad Debt	526
Depreciation	74
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>90,474</b>
<b>Net Surplus to 31 March 2018</b>	<b>32,202</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

As at 31 March 2019	31 March 2019
<b>Assets</b>	
<i>Current</i>	
Cash	9
Westpac Bank - Current Account	99,718
Westpac Bank - Savings Account	38,412
Westpac Bank - Term Deposit	105,479
Debtors	8,797
<i>Non-current</i>	
Laptop	111
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>252,526</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	5,140
Year-end accrual	7,868
GST payable	7,488
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>20,496</b>
<b>Net Equity 31 March 2019</b>	<b>232,030</b>

Accounts have been audited by BDO.

# Training

This year GEN provided ten training courses and taught 186 students.

## **Introduction to Cost- Benefit Analysis**

Dates: 5 and 6 April 2018

Presenters: Joanne Leung, Ministry of Transport and Kirsten Jensen, the Treasury

Attendance: 35 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

## **An Introduction to New Zealand's economic history**

Dates: 11, 15, 22, 25 and 29 June 2018

Presenter: Brian Easton

Attendance: 8 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

## **Introductory Microeconomics for Policy Analysis**

Dates: 17, 18, 24 and 27 July 2018

Presenter: Dr Veronica Jacobsen, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Attendance: 33 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

## **Introduction to Behavioral Economics for Policy**

Dates: 7 and 8 August 2018

Presenter: Dr Marcos Pelenur, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Attendance: 29 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

## **Introduction to Environmental Economics**

Dates: 20, 27 August and 3 September 2018

Presenter: Dr Ross Cullen

Attendance: 6 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

## **Introduction to Cost- Benefit Analysis**

Dates: 12 and 13 September 2018

Presenters: Joanne Leung, Ministry of Transport and Kirsten Jensen, The Treasury

Attendance: 16 registrations

Venue: The Treasury, 1 the Terrace, Wellington

### **Introductory Macroeconomics for Policy Analysis**

Dates: 23, 24, 26, 29 October and 2, 5 November 2018

Presenter: Andrew Coleman, New Zealand Productivity Commission

Attendance: 9 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington

### **Introductory Microeconomics for Policy Analysis**

Dates: 30 and 31 October 2018

Presenter: Dr Veronica Jacobsen, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Attendance: 9 registrations

Venue: Crowne Plaza, 128 Albert St, Auckland

### **Introduction to Behavioral Economics for Policy**

Dates: 28 and 29 November 2018

Presenter: Dr Marcos Pelenur, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Attendance: 12 registrations

Venue: Crowne Plaza, 128 Albert St, Auckland

### **Introductory Microeconomics for Policy Analysis**

Dates: 11, 14, 18 and 21 February 2019

Presenter: Dr Veronica Jacobsen, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Attendance: 21 registrations

Venue: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Wellington



# Events

This year GEN ran a total five public events directly. The events were attended by a wide range of people from across the public and private sectors.

## **23 August 2018**

A day in the life of an economist working in the public sector

## **13 September 2018**

GEN and GAN Networking Event

## **13 August 2019**

GEN Networking Event. Speaker: Eric Crampton, New Zealand Initiative

## **7 October 2019**

GEN Lunchtime Session: Better and fairer measures of school quality. Speaker: Joel Hernandez, New Zealand Initiative

## **30 October 2019**

GEN and GAN Networking Event, Who's going to win the RWC2019? What does the data say and why does it matter? Speaker: Dr Niven Winchester, Motu

# Conference

GEN's 8<sup>th</sup> annual conference "Improving people's lives through effective policy" was held on 9 November 2018 at Te Papa of New Zealand, in Wellington. The conference was well attended, with 214 registrations. The programme included a number of high-calibre speakers, including:

**Lord Gus O'Donnell**, *Former British Cabinet Secretary*

Building Better States

**Professor Stephen Jenkins**, *London School of Economics and Political Science*

Improving our understanding of inequality and poverty for policy effectiveness.

**Professor Allan McConnell**, *University of Sydney*

Mapping the challenges of effective policy making in a messy world.

**Professor Jereon van der Heijden**, *Victoria University of Wellington*

Nudging NZ: The use of behavioural insights in effective regulation.

**Danielle Wood**, *Gratton Institute*

Effective economic and social policy: Why institutions matter.

**Murray Sherwin**, *Productivity Commission*

Old tricks for new dogs: Thoughtful and rigorous application of economics and policy tools to solve 'new' policy problems.

**Judge Andrew Becroft**, *Children's Commissioner*

Putting children at the centre of policy-making: Fad or foundation?

**Hon Grant Robertson**, *Minister of Finance*

Conference opening.

# Committee Members

Mark Lea (Chair)

Adam Richardson (Deputy Chair)

Joanne Leung (Treasurer, appointed March 2019)

Zaneta Waitai (Secretary, resigned November 2019)

Daniel Griffiths

Diana Cook (appointed March 2019)

Girol Karacaogolu (resigned November 2019)

Joey Au

Philip Stevens

Phillip Mellor

Polly Vowles

Sarah Williams (appointed March 2019)

Tamara Linnhoff

Marcos Pelenur (resigned June 2019)

Patrick Nolan (resigned March 2019)

Peter Bailey (resigned March 2019)

GOVERNMENT ECONOMICS NETWORK (GEN)

c/- Mark Lea

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WELLINGTON

<https://gen.org.nz/tiki-index.php>