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Patron, Lyn Provost

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Transparency International New Zealand

World first independent assessment of the integrity of the NZ financial system

Financial sector leaders from around New Zealand gathered in Auckland this evening to launch Transparency International New Zealand's world leading method for measuring the robustness of New Zealand's financial systems.

Called the [Financial Integrity Systems Assessment](#) (FISA), this approach is the first ever review of a country's financial systems.

Reserve Bank Governor Adrian Orr, Financial Markets Authority CEO Rob Everett and leaders from banks, credit unions, insurance, kiwi-saver providers, regulators, and professional organisations joined Transparency International New Zealand at the event.

"Financial Services affect every single New Zealander. It is vital we can trust our financial partners in life. I am heartened and encouraged that so many of our financial organisations want to demonstrate their integrity to New Zealanders through actions, not just words," says Transparency International New Zealand Chair Suzanne Snively.

Ms Snively says, *"The development of the tool was designed to continuously enhance the special attributes of New Zealand's Financial system. It seeks to ensure the system is future-proofed and demonstrates to depositors, investors and stakeholders the resilience of New Zealand's financial systems."*

The findings of the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Banking have shaken the industry and confidence of its stakeholders. This assessment is timely as New Zealand financial service providers strive to highlight the ways culture and conduct differ here.

Ms Snively said, *“We know from the regulators there is still work to do. From a transparency lens there is simply not enough evidence provided by the financial organisations to reassure customers they have nothing to worry about.”*

The integrity assessment tools developed in New Zealand over past years are well regarded internationally. FISA is designed to be a continuous learning tool to future-proof our financial system. It offers financial institutions a performance self assessment followed by an independent expert review. FISA will identify the strengths of the system as well as highlighting areas to improve governance and integrity systems.

Seven practice areas are assessed, starting with ‘tone at the top’. The culture and actions of boards and management teams anchor the operations of an organisation. When viewed collectively with the other areas – conduct, knowledge, processes, procedures and reporting – we get a substantive view of areas that will benefit from improvement.

While the results of the voluntary self-assessment will be anonymised, financial organisations who take part will be able to receive their results to compare with their industry and the overall sector. The launch of the FISA Methodology has received wide consultation. Organisations are invited to comment prior to the self-assessment beginning. TINZ expects to report back on FISA in early 2020.

Background information for journalists

1. Media Contact

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2. Transparency International New Zealand (TINZ) has provided international leadership over the last 10 years in the development of Integrity Systems Measurement tools.

The National Integrity Survey (NIS) undertaken in 2013 and again in 2018 examines the entire country’s integrity systems, that is the pillars of democracy that ensure a robust, honest and transparent ways of working across all aspects of our society and contribute to our security, wellbeing and reputation.

Visit <https://www.transparency.org.nz/FISA> for background information.

3. About Transparency International

Transparency International is a global civil society coalition based in Berlin, leading the fight against corruption. It compiles a number of measures of different aspects of corruption including the Corruption Perceptions Index, the Global Corruption Barometer, and the Bribe Payers Index. Information on Transparency International can be found at www.transparency.org.

4. About the New Zealand chapter of Transparency International

The local chapter of Transparency International works to actively promote the highest levels of transparency, accountability, integrity and public participation in government and civil society in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Find TINZ at www.transparency.org.nz.

In addition to its publication of the National Integrity Systems Assessment, and its annual analysis of the Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International New Zealand has several projects designed to support greater integrity. These include

- Development of a Financial Integrity Systems Assessment Tool, for use with the financial sector;
- Leaders Integrity forums for senior public leaders
- Free Anti-Corruption Training Tool (transparency.org.nz/Anti-Corruption-Training) designed by leading experts in the field, which enables organisations to provide training for their personnel.
- Submissions and advocacy
- Thought leadership through communications and events.