



Insurance Activities in the Public Sector

Project summary

AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* is effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. It replaces AASB 4 *Insurance Contracts*, AASB 1023 *General Insurance Contracts* and AASB 1038 *Life Insurance Contracts*.

The AASB issued a Discussion Paper in 2017 to elicit views on:

- how AASB 17 should be applied in the public sector; and
- whether any public-sector-specific modifications or guidance might be required.

The AASB considered comments on the Discussion Paper and noted more work is needed on both matters before proposing any amendments to AASB 17.

The AASB decided to work jointly with the New Zealand Accounting Standards Board to progress the project.

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Project priority: Medium

Issued documents

- Discussion Paper *Australian-specific Insurance Issues – Regulatory Disclosures and Public Sector Entities*
- Media Release *Insurance Contracts – more transparency for investors*

AASB outreach

- Informal targeted outreach conducted in 2020–2021

Project status

- To conduct further field testing
- Deliberation of public-sector-specific issues

Board deliberations

- AASB Action Alert Update and Board papers

Project news

Date	News
10–11 November 2021	November 2021 Action Alert
8–9 September 2021	September 2021 Action Alert
21–22 June 2021	June 2021 Action Alert
20–21 April 2021	April 2021 Action Alert
24–25 February 2021	February 2021 Action Alert

The staff of the AASB have prepared this summary for information purposes only. The Board decisions described are tentative and do not change current accounting pronouncements unless otherwise indicated. Official positions of the AASB are determined only after extensive due process and deliberations. While this summary is regularly updated, it does not provide a comprehensive review or statement of events and should not be treated as such.

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November 2021 The Board considered a draft Exposure Draft that would propose modifications to AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* for application by public sector entities. With a few clarifications, the draft ED reflects the decisions made at the Board's meetings in April, June and September 2021.

The Board noted that the NZASB will consider the draft ED at its December 2021 meeting. The plan is for both Boards to approve the Exposure Draft at their respective February 2022 meetings. Some stakeholder outreach on the draft ED will be conducted during November and December 2021, with a particular focus on the proposed indicators for identifying arrangements that would be scoped into AASB 17, which may lead to some amendments to the draft ED for the Board to consider in February 2022.

The Board also noted an issue regarding whether confidence levels for risk adjustments in liabilities for remaining coverage and liabilities for incurred claims should be aligned. The Board decided to note the issue in the Basis for Conclusions of the Exposure Draft but not to propose any public sector guidance on the matter.

[5.1](#) Cover Memo

[5.2](#) Staff paper: Working draft ED

[5.3](#) Staff paper: Risk adjustment – alignment of confidence levels

September 2021 The Board continued its consideration of issues relating to the application of AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* to public sector entities. The Board decided to propose:

- (a) extending the mandatory application date of AASB 17 for public sector entities at least until annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2025, with early adoption to be permitted;
- (b) exempting public sector entities from applying the requirement in paragraph 16 to divide a portfolio of insurance contracts into onerous and non-onerous subgroups of contracts, but require disclosure about the nature of the pricing process including, for example, any use of standardised pricing and cross-subsidisation that might occur between different groups of contracts;
- (c) exempting public sector entities from applying the requirement in paragraph 22 to divide a portfolio of insurance contracts into annual cohorts based on their issue date;
- (d) modifying paragraph 25 so that the timing of recognition of a group of insurance contracts does not depend on when the group becomes onerous;
- (e) not specifically exempting public sector captive insurers from applying AASB 17 in their separate financial statements; and
- (f) not making public-sector-specific modifications to AASB 17 relating to:
 - (i) the measurement of investments backing insurance liabilities; and
 - (ii) the classification and presentation of risk mitigation program and other similar costs, which are not directly attributable to particular insurance arrangements.

The Board confirmed its decision to propose not making public-sector-specific modifications to the requirement to include a risk adjustment for non-financial risk in measuring liabilities for incurred claims. The Board decided that its Basis for Conclusions in the forthcoming

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consultation document should note the range of other possible approaches considered by the Board, including providing a rebuttable presumption for a risk adjustment based on a 75% probability of adequacy.

The Board confirmed its earlier decisions to propose the following as useful indicators, amongst other indicators, for identifying whether an arrangement should be accounted for under AASB 17:

- (a) the extent to which an arrangement is binding on the public sector entity is determined (in part) by whether the public sector entity (or its controlling government) has the practical ability to change a benefit retrospectively. The Board decided that practical ability is determined by reference to existing or substantively enacted regulation without consideration of political issues; and
- (b) the public sector entity adopts liability management practices normally associated with insurance contracts. The Board decided that this indicator should include, as an example, claims management practices that involve consideration of the extent to which claims are assessed to cater specifically for a beneficiary's losses, rather than being broadly-determined standardised amounts.

[11.1](#) Cover Memo

[11.2](#) Staff paper: Identifying and accounting for onerous contracts and related unit of account issues

[11.3](#) Staff paper: Redeliberation of Scope and Risk adjustment topics

[11.4](#) Staff paper: Measurement of investments backing insurance liabilities

[11.5](#) Staff paper: Risk mitigation program costs and other similar costs

[11.6](#) Staff paper: Captive insurers

June 2021

The Board continued its consideration of issues relating to the application of AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* to public sector entities.

In respect of the measurement of insurance liabilities, the Board decided to propose that there should be no public-sector-specific modifications to AASB 17 regarding:

- (a) the discounting of fulfilment cash flows; and
- (b) the requirements for presenting the impacts of inflation in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

In respect of assessing eligibility for applying the premium allocation approach to measure the liability for remaining coverage, the Board decided to propose including the following public-sector-specific guidance in AASB 17 or the Board's Basis for Conclusions to AASB 17:

- (a) clarification that, when applying paragraph 34(b), assessing a public sector entity's practical ability to fully price for risks or benefits would include assessing the managerial capacity of its controlling government, including any relevant Ministers, to determine pricing or benefits;
- (b) clarification that, where a public sector entity has a legislated obligation to stand ready to insure future policyholders, that obligation would not affect the coverage period; and

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(c) guidance to assist a public sector entity to evaluate when it has the practical ability to fully price for risks or benefits under paragraph 34(b)(ii) when a long-term view is taken on setting pricing and benefits.

In relation to (c), the Board also decided to propose that a public sector entity would be required to disclose information about the manner in which long-run pricing is determined when that pricing takes into account risks relating to future coverage periods.

[14.1](#) Cover Memo

[14.2](#) Staff paper: Discounting and inflating under AASB 17/NZ IFRS 17 by public sector entities

[14.3](#) Staff paper: Eligibility for the PAA under AASB 17/NZ IFRS 17 for public sector entities

April 2021

Scope

The Board decided that it would be helpful to set out clear indicators in AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* to assist public sector entities in identifying whether their arrangements should be accounted for under AASB 17.

The Board considered the following factors would be useful indicators for that assessment:

- (a) the public sector arrangement covers similar risks and provides similar benefits as those provided by private sector insurers;
- (b) the extent to which an arrangement is binding on the public sector entity, determined (in part) by whether the public sector entity (or its controlling government) has the practical ability to change a benefit retrospectively. An entity may currently have the right to make a retrospective change or a substantively enacted right to make the change;
- (c) the public sector arrangement has an identifiable coverage period;
- (d) there is a stand-alone binding arrangement, which might incorporate elements contained in statutes or regulation related to the public sector entity's activities;
- (e) the arrangement involves contributions from scheme participants that are related to the risks covered;
- (f) the public sector entity adopts liability management practices normally associated with insurance contracts (such as underwriting and reinsurance of risks accepted from participants); and
- (g) assets are held in a separate fund, or an entity has access to earmarked assets, in order to satisfy benefits when due.

The Board considered the following factors are unlikely to be useful indicators for determining whether a public sector entity has arrangements that should be accounted for under AASB 17:

- (a) classification of an entity as a for-profit entity or a not-for-profit entity;
- (b) the nature of the coverage as fault-based or no-fault-based;

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| | <p>(c) the practice of an entity in generally assessing the financial performance and financial position of an arrangement on a regular basis; and</p> <p>(d) the extent to which claims are assessed to cater specifically for a beneficiary's losses, rather than being broadly determined standardised amounts.</p> |
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The Board noted that:

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| | <p>(a) it should not be necessary for the Board to specifically identify particular public sector schemes as being within or outside the scope of AASB 17; and</p> <p>(b) it may be useful at some stage to include examples in helping to clarify how the indicators might be applied.</p> |
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In respect of arrangements with a bundle of services (where some services might be insurance and some might not be insurance), the Board reached the view that AASB 17 includes sufficient guidance to address whether a contract should be unbundled and any distinct services should be accounted for under another Standard.

Risk adjustment for non-financial risk in measuring liabilities for incurred claims

The Board decided that the risk adjustment requirements in AASB 17 did not require any specific public sector modifications. The Board noted that judgement would need to be applied by public sector entities to determine the level of compensation they require for bearing the risk of uncertainty associated with liabilities for incurred claims.

The Board also decided that public-sector-specific guidance was not required regarding accounting for risk adjustments at the consolidated group level.

10.1 Cover Memo

10.2 Staff paper: Scope of application of AASB 17/NZ IFRS 17 to public sector entities

10.3 Staff paper: Risk adjustments for non-financial risk

February 2021

The Board confirmed the objective of this project is to consider whether it would be appropriate to apply AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* to public sector entities in accordance with the *AASB Not-for-Profit Entity Standard-Setting Framework* and its transaction neutrality principle; and as far as possible to achieve a consistent accounting outcome in the Australian and New Zealand public sectors.

The Board instructed staff to address the following issues for deliberation at future meetings:

- identifying relevant 'insurance-like' activities that should be accounted for under AASB 17;
- identifying insurance entities that should prepare financial statements;
- eligibility for the 'simplified' premium allocation approach to measuring liabilities for remaining coverage;
- discount rates;
- the relevance and measurement of risk adjustments for the liability for incurred claims;
- the classification of 'non-insurance' cost;

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- the recognition of onerous contracts; and
- the measurement of investments backing insurance liabilities.

The Board's decisions are broadly consistent with the decisions made by the NZASB at its February 2021 meeting.

[3.1](#) Staff Paper: Scope of application of AASB 17/ PBE IFRS 17 to public sector entities

[3.2](#) Staff paper: Joint AASB-NZASB project objectives and next steps

September 2018

The Board considered a summary of constituent feedback on the Discussion Paper *Australian-specific Insurance Issues – Regulatory Disclosures and Public Sector Entities* and decided to carry out the following activities:

- (a) conduct further field testing of the 'insurance-like' criteria;
- (b) based on the field testing, consider whether clarifications of the 'insurance-like' criteria are required, particularly the 'funding' criteria;
- (c) consider the assumptions used in determining discount rates for public sector entities; and
- (d) consider the assumptions used in determining risk margins for public sector entities.

[8.1](#) Staff Paper: Summary of comments on Insurance Discussion Paper

[8.2](#) For noting: Discussion Paper *Australian-specific Insurance Issues – Regulatory Disclosures and Public Sector Entities*

October 2017

The Board agreed that the proposed amendments to AASB 17 *Insurance Contracts* to include insurance risk created by statute rather than contract should apply to both for-profit and NFP public sector entities, as insurance-like arrangements arising from statute are sufficiently prevalent in both sectors.

To finalise the Discussion Paper proposals, the Board decided to clarify that:

- (a) in determining whether an arrangement is insurance-like, criteria that are classified as 'mandatory' must be satisfied, but this is not sufficient to conclude that an arrangement is insurance-like (ie the non-mandatory indicators must also be considered); and
- (b) guidance should specify that a public sector entity's risk adjustment for non-financial risk should reflect the specific risk appetite and cost of capital of the entity in line with the general principles of AASB 17, and therefore it may be necessary to consider aspects such as government guarantees supported by taxing powers or monopoly status.

In addition, the Board decided in relation to Australian-specific amendments to AASB 17:

- (a) a project timeline, which includes both a discussion paper and exposure draft, with a view to completing the project by November 2018;

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- (b) to include illustrative examples as an appendix to the discussion paper to help entities determine when arrangements are insurance-like;
- (c) to expose in the discussion paper regulatory disclosures currently required in AASB 1038, which were not carried forward when superseded by AASB 17, with a recommendation to not carry forward the disclosures to AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures; and
- (d) to do no further work on the interaction between AASB 17 Insurance Contracts and AASB 1056 Superannuation Entities when a superannuation entity has to consolidate an subsidiary issuing insurance contracts.

[8.0](#) Cover Memo: Insurance Contracts

[8.1](#) AASB Discussion Paper *Australian specific insurance issues – regulatory disclosures and public sector insurers* [DRAFT]

[8.2](#) Analysis of Arrangements Against Insurance-like Criteria [DRAFT]

[8.3](#) Staff collation and analysis of regulatory disclosures being considered for retention

[8.4](#) Meeting minutes of September 2017 Insurance Project Advisory Panel Meeting

June 2017

The Board considered the application of the forthcoming Accounting Standard AASB 17 Insurance Contracts to NFP entities and decided that:

- (a) where a NFP entity issues an insurance contract (as defined in AASB 17), the Board’s policy of transaction neutrality will apply and the entity would be required to account for that contract as required by AASB 17;
- (b) the prevalence and magnitude of non-contractual NFP ‘insurance-like’ arrangements warrants NFP-specific modifications;
- (c) ‘insurance-like’ arrangements should be defined in relation to the manner in which they are managed, for example:
 - (i) whether an arrangement’s obligations to the insured parties, including those arising from statutory obligations, is estimated similarly to that of an insurance contract as defined in AASB 17; and
 - (ii) whether the funding for the arrangement is calculated so as to replace premium collections, or whether the funding is calculated on some other basis;
- (d) where the ‘insurance-like’ arrangement is managed in a similar manner to that of an insurance contract, the entity should apply AASB 17 to account for that arrangement despite not meeting the definition of an insurance contract; and
- (e) apart from the necessary modifications to achieve the above, no other NFP-specific modifications should be made to AASB 17.

In developing the amendments noted above, the Board will have regard to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board’s continuing work on its Social Benefits project. To the extent possible, that work will be incorporated into the NFP-specific amendments.

[3.1](#) Staff Paper: Public sector scope and modifications

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[3.2](#) IPSASB Criteria for insurance contracts

May 2017

The Board received a presentation on the latest developments regarding the forthcoming IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts. In addition, the Board reviewed tentative project timelines to issue IFRS 17 in Australia, initially for for-profit entities, and to consider any further guidance necessary for not-for-profit entities in both the private and public sectors.

August 2016

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Public sector insurers

The Board decided that it will clarify the scope of the forthcoming new AASB insurance standard for public sector entities, to ensure similar activities are treated similarly. The Board asked staff to:

- (a) conduct more thorough outreach through HoTARAC members and with the affected entities directly; and
- (b) prepare a possible exposure draft that would make proposals about the types of arrangements to be accounted for using insurance standards, which would be intended to take effect under the forthcoming AASB standard.

The Board noted there may be a need to address the interaction of the likely contract boundary and onerous contract requirements. If the impact of the forthcoming new AASB insurance standard would be to require public sector insurers to account for some sub-groups of annual contracts as if they were long-term (possibly perpetual) contracts using the 'general model' for liability measurement, there should be a public sector-specific paragraph to avoid this consequence. The Board asked staff to draft a relevant paragraph in case it is needed.

The Board also noted that similar issues around the interaction of the likely contract boundary and onerous contract requirements may arise for health insurers because of the Australian regulatory regime of 'community rating'.

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[4.3](#) Staff Paper: Analysis of key issues arising from forthcoming IFRS 17 in context of AASB's *Process for Modifying IFRS for NFP*

June 2016

The Board noted that the IASB has completed its substantive decision making on a forthcoming revised IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts that, if adopted, would supersede the existing AASB 4 *Insurance Contracts*, AASB 1023 *General Insurance Contracts* and AASB 1038 *Life Insurance Contracts*. The Board:

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- (c) noted issues of potential significance to the public sector; and

...

The Board asked staff to:

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- (a) prepare a more detailed paper for presentation at the next Board meeting on whether any differences from the revised IFRS 4 might be justified for public sector insurers, following more stakeholder engagement with that sector;

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- [10.4](#) Staff paper: Implications for public sector insurers of a revised IFRS 4