# Today’s Impact

## Why it matters

Leaders want to know: If we invest in this AI system, what will change, and how soon?

A compelling use case shows not just future potential, but immediate public value.

It must also show a realistic view of how people, processes, and technology will be affected.

Strong articulation of today’s impact:

* Justifies early investment and effort.
* Demonstrates a clear return for users, staff, and the wider system.
* Prepares for practical changes in ways of working.
* Aligns with the public service focus on delivering better, faster, fairer outcomes, while protecting public trust.
* Shows how innovation can deliver tangible benefits without unnecessary delay.

Today's impact should be concrete, measurable, and grounded in user and service improvements, not vague promises of future transformation.

## How to describe today’s impact

When preparing the Today’s Impact section, your team may consider the following:

* Identify quick wins and early benefits for users:
  + Describe immediate improvements for users, our people, or communities once the AI system is prototyped or piloted.
* Describe impacts on staff and capability:
  + Would our people need new training?
  + Would new roles be required to operate or monitor the AI system?
  + Would certain tasks or roles change significantly?
* Outline impacts on processes and ways of working:
  + Would outdated processes be replaced, streamlined, or digitised?
  + What operational changes would need to happen to support the AI system?
  + How do we anticipate AI adoption to fit into our organisation’s culture and ways of working?
* Highlight technology impacts:
  + Would new infrastructure be needed?
  + Would the AI system reusable across other services or agencies?
  + Would the solution support cross-functional applications in the future?
* Addressing scaling challenges:
  + Consider the transition from a pilot project to broader implementation.
  + What strategies are necessary to scale effectively?
  + How can risks be mitigated during the expansion phase?
* Be specific and measurable: Where possible, describe improvements in:
  + Workload of our people
  + Accuracy
  + Equity
  + Service speed
  + Time saved
  + Errors reduced
  + Access expanded
  + Cost efficiencies gained
* Ground in reality:
  + Only promise impacts that are realistic based on the planned prototype or pilot.
  + Do not overhype the early stages.

## Example of Strong Today’s Impact Description

* Immediate Benefits
  + Hardship grant processing times reduced by 30% in pilot office.
  + Applicants receive decisions two days faster, improving access and trust.
* Staff and Capability Impacts:
  + Frontline caseworkers trained in interpreting AI summaries and maintaining human oversight.
  + New role created: AI Service Coordinator, responsible for monitoring outputs and managing feedback loops.
* Process Changes:
  + Manual document triage step removed, freeing up 15% of caseworker time.
  + New escalation pathways introduced for cases flagged by AI for human review.
* Technology Impacts:
  + AI summarisation model built using reusable architecture, allowing future application to emergency housing services and disability support grants.
  + System integrated into existing case management platform, with minimal new infrastructure needed.

## Example of Poor Today’s Impact Description

Today’s Impact: Our AI system will revolutionise all government services and make New Zealand the world leader in AI.

Why this is poor:

* Vague and unrealistic.
* No mention of impacts on staff, processes, or technology.
* Promises massive change without evidence or a phased plan.

**Common Traps**

* Ignoring staff impacts: New systems always require training, change management, or new roles. Plan for this.
* Forgetting about process redesign: AI systems often expose outdated ways of working. Processes must adapt, not resist.
* Assuming technology is “plug and play”: Infrastructure, interoperability, and reusability should be considered early.
* Ignoring diverse user experiences: Different groups may experience benefits differently. Think about equity from the start.

**Summary Checklist**

1. Question: What immediate benefits will users see?

Purpose: Shows early public value

1. Question: What training or staff changes are immediately needed?

Purpose: Prepares for first people impacts

1. Question: What processes need to change or become outdated?

Purpose: Ensures ways of working are updated

1. Question: What technology impacts must be managed?

Purpose: Supports scaling and reuse

1. Question: How will early impacts build trust and learning?

Purpose: Builds strong foundation for scaling