



Report

Date: 12 May 2021

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment

Food Secure Communities: increasing healthy, affordable food in communities

Purpose of the report

- 1 You have asked for advice on options for funding initiatives to increase healthy, affordable food in communities that prevent clients from needing to seek Hardship Assistance for food or support from foodbanks.

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **Note** that there is a high level of community interest in becoming food secure through increasing access to healthy, affordable food in low income communities (food security); and Māori exercising tino rangatiratanga over food systems that feed and nourish whānau (food sovereignty).
- 2 **Note** that MSD has communicated broad intent to undertake another round of funding for the Food Secure Communities (FSC) Implementation Fund in F2022 to support communities to become food secure. We have put this on hold until we receive your advice on this paper.
- 3 **Note** that there are some excellent initiatives that have made good progress in supporting communities to become food secure and which would benefit from additional funding to scale up; however, there are other initiatives in earlier stages of development that would equally benefit from additional funding. Therefore, our recommendation is to proceed with options b) or c) below.
- 4 **Agree** to progress one of the following options:

4.1 Option a: Immediate closed tender to selected initiatives that can be promoted by 1 July (\$0.4m), while we progress a smaller FSC Implementation Fund (\$0.5m)

AGREE / ~~DISAGREE~~

4.2 Option b: A larger FSC Implementation Fund (\$0.9m) while promoting one or more selected initiatives. This announcement could be made in conjunction with the Budget 2021 timetable.

AGREE / ~~DISAGREE~~

4.3 Option c: We identify additional funding within MSD to announce a much larger FSC Implementation Fund (\$2m proposed) while promoting one or more

selected initiatives. This announcement could also be made in conjunction with the Budget 2021 timetable.

AGREE / DISAGREE

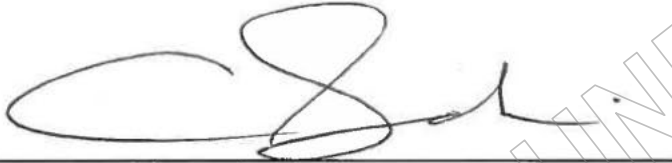
5. **Note** that we will start a new section in the Family Services Directory to enable MSD staff to advise clients of options to access healthy, affordable food as appropriate.



Marama Edwards
Deputy Chief Executive
Maori, Communities & Partnerships

13/5/2021

Date



Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development

16/5/21

Date

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Addressing food insecurity through supporting food security and sovereignty

- 2 Food insecurity in New Zealand is primarily caused by households not having enough money for food. Addressing food insecurity in New Zealand requires addressing income adequacy and unemployment, debt, and housing issues for low-income households.
- 3 MSD's Food Secure Communities programme arose following the significant increase in food insecurity following the emergence of COVID-19 due to high levels of unemployment and loss of incomes. It is a \$32 million programme over two years to 30 June 2022 that has two main purposes:
 - a) Addressing the additional demand on community food providers, and
 - b) Supporting communities to become food secure.
- 4 Supporting communities to become food secure requires access to healthy, affordable food in low income communities (food security); and supporting Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga over food systems that feed and nourish whānau (food sovereignty). In doing so, this helps reduce the dependency on foodbanks and Special Needs Grants for food and helps shift the experience of whānau from one of whakamā to whakamana.
- 5 This will not replace the need for Special Needs Grants for food, which remain a last resort for whānau who find themselves in circumstances where they do not have enough money for food. Equally, it is likely to take a significant period of time before these initiatives are of sufficient scale to replace the need for foodbanks and other community food providers. Given this, it makes sense to continue to support food rescue organisations who use volunteers to rescue good quality food to support people in need, as well as to support other community food providers at an appropriate level (e.g. Iwi/hapū, foodbanks) who are continuing to experience high levels of demand. However, the focus is now shifting towards supporting communities to become food secure.

MSD is supporting communities to become food secure

- 6 The Food Secure Communities programme has been supporting communities to become food secure through a mix of funding and capability building.
- 7 *Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective* is providing sector leadership in driving this change, including through building capability of communities and providers with transitioning to practices that uphold mana, and create food security and sovereignty.
- 8 The Food Secure Communities team have a regular sector pānui and more recently, (together with *Kore Hiakai*) a webinar series, both of which focus on promoting resources and examples of community food security and sovereignty. The first webinar had over 100 attendees, showing the extent of interest in this topic.
- 9 Food Secure Communities has also provided \$1 million in small *Food Secure Communities* grants to 49 communities over two years to 30 June 2022 to develop and implement plans to strengthen their food security. The larger \$21m *Community Food Response* grants ask providers to report on how they are contributing towards creating a food secure community.
- 10 MSD's Community Capability and Resilience Fund (CCRF) has also supported several initiatives aimed at creating food security and sovereignty to date. This \$36 million fund over two years provides support for community groups working with priority populations as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Communities are exploring options and building partnerships

- 11 The Food Secure Communities team have been visiting communities around the country who have been in receipt of funding from the programme.
- 12 Iwi who prior to COVID-19 had focused on using their land and resources to produce food to grow their asset base turned to feeding whānau over COVID-19, with a number now focused on food sovereignty – using this asset base to feed and nourish whānau.

- 13 Many existing community food providers have spoken about the way the Food Secure Communities and Community Food Response funding has resourced them to explore new ways of doing things. This means they have been able to explore how they can make their existing operating model more mana-enhancing for whānau (e.g. choice-based food parcels) or to increase healthy affordable food in their communities.
- 14 Several localities across the country have realised that they have been working in silos and COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of collaboration. Many have since started a process of working more closely together. This journey is not always easy. Sometimes it has shown differences of kaupapa which has taken time to work through.
- 15 Other communities had already begun a journey towards becoming food secure and the funding has helped support their initiatives. However, these initiatives also take time and concerted efforts across a range of sectors.
- 16 Many communities are looking to offer cooking classes, preserving and gardening workshops. They are planting community gardens or maara kai and are using this to supplement pātaka kai (food pantries) or providing this at low or no cost to their community. They are running crop swaps, developing urban farms or supporting whānau to plant vege gardens. Many communities are exploring or want to explore food co-op models (such as fruit and vege co-ops or food boxes) but many say they need upskilling to be able to do this¹.

Our plans to date to further fund communities to become food secure

- 17 The Food Secure Communities programme has \$1.1m of unallocated funding for F2022 from the Community Food Response Fund. We had originally planned to allocate \$0.7m to a further grant funding round to support communities to implement food security initiatives and hold back a contingency of \$0.4m for COVID resurgence and other immediate needs.
- 18 The rationale for the new Food Secure Communities (FSC) Implementation Fund is to enable communities to build on the plans they had developed through the previous Food Secure Communities Grant Fund, while also opening it up to further new initiatives. Most of the previous grants were for \$20,000 over two years. Our intention has been to fund approximately another 45 initiatives at around \$15,000 each. We intended to release the fund in early May 2021 and close it in July. We will now hold until we have received your advice on this paper. We have signalled our broad intentions to the sector, but not the level of funding.
- 19 Additionally, the Community Capability and Resilience Fund is planning a further funding round to be released from July 2021 that will mostly be directed towards strengthening existing community initiatives to ensure sustainability. The next round will be focused on building community capability and resilience, which may include components that support food sovereignty.

Options to fund and promote initiatives that increase healthy, affordable food in communities

- 20 You have asked for information about initiatives that are increasing healthy, affordable food in communities and that would benefit from extra support while work is going on to prevent the need for high levels of hardship grants.
- 21 There are several excellent initiatives across both the Food Secure Communities programme and CCRF that are doing interesting, innovative work that achieve this purpose and that we could work with to scale up. These are outlined in **Appendix One**. This includes eight initiatives, but we may identify more following further provider visits (including to Te Tai Tokerau).

¹ Common Unity Project Aotearoa in the Hutt Valley is currently working on a six-part resource kit for providers and communities to support them to become 'community food hubs', with support from Kore Hiakai.

- 22 We propose the following options below for F2022. Because we have already communicated our intentions for a FSC Implementation Fund these options include continuing the fund, with a possible closed tender to the selected flagship initiatives.
- 23 Please note that the initiatives have been selected because they are quality initiatives that have already made good progress in increasing access to healthy, affordable food in communities. There are many other initiatives that are in earlier stages of development, and which would benefit equally or more from funding. Therefore, our preference is options b) or c) which do not include the closed tender.
- 24 We intend to start a new section in the Family Services Directory for funded initiatives and will work with providers to list them once the initiative is established. This will enable MSD staff to advise clients of options to access healthy, affordable food as appropriate. Our intention is that this helps to resolve the clients needs and therefore to reduce the need for Special Needs Grants for food.

a) Immediate closed tender to the selected initiatives in Appendix One for you to promote (\$0.4m), plus a smaller FSC Implementation Fund (\$0.5m)

We could issue an immediate closed tender to the initiatives in Appendix One, with decisions made and communicated before 1 July to allow you to promote the successful initiatives. Timeframes for providers to submit initiatives would be tight, but we could advise providers that their application would be considered again (if late or unsuccessful) in the FSC Implementation Fund.

We would continue to progress the existing FSC Implementation Fund round as soon as we have your advice. Decisions on the Fund would be made and communicated in August 2021.

The Food Secure Communities COVID resurgence and contingency fund would be reduced from \$0.4m to \$0.2m to pay for this (with underspend identified elsewhere in MSD if required).

b) You announce a \$0.9m FSC Implementation Fund while promoting one or more of the selected initiatives.

We could identify one or more initiatives from Appendix One for you to visit and promote, alongside promotion of a slightly larger FSC Implementation Fund. The fund would be targeted at both the scale up of successful initiatives and new additional initiatives. This announcement could be made in conjunction with the Budget 2021 timetable. As above, the contingency fund would be reduced from \$0.4m to \$0.2m to pay for this.

c) Identify additional funding within MSD for you to announce a larger Food Secure Communities Implementation Fund (\$2m proposed) while promoting one or more selected initiatives.

We could identify one or more initiatives from Appendix One for you to visit and promote, alongside promotion of a much larger FSC Implementation Fund. This announcement could be made in conjunction with the Budget 2021 timetable. The contingency fund would be reduced from \$0.4m to \$0.2m to pay for this.

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Appendix One: Selected Food Secure Community Initiatives

Provider Name	Locality	Description of initiative	MSD Funding for the initiative See key below ²	Our assessment
Middlemore Foundation	Manurewa, Auckland	<p>Middlemore Foundation supports better health, homes and education within Counties Manukau. MSD funding is contributing towards the further development of an existing food security initiative Te Maara Kai O Wirihihana, a community-led urban market garden being developed on land located between Manurewa High School and the Manukau Super Clinic. The land is owned by DHB and has been gifted to the project.</p> <p>Te Maara Kai o Wirihihana is establishing an urban market garden providing income to two full-time farmers and an operation that will provide high quality, low cost / no cost fruit and vegetables to families in Manurewa. It will run as a community social venture and intends to be self-sustaining after three years.</p> <p>Food waste from the Super Clinic is being transferred to the site for worm farms, while produce from gardens will be supplied to DHB kitchens for patients and families. Access to garden is through the school at present, however housing and new roading is planned that will open up access to the community garden via a public walkway.</p> <p>Te Maara Kai O Wirihihana Middlemore Foundation</p>	FSC \$20,000 over two years	<p>We visited this initiative in December 2020. It is in early stages s9(2)(g) (i) OIA but we otherwise support this and believe they would benefit from additional support.</p>
Hauraki Māori Trust Board (HMTB)	Coromandel and Hauraki Plains	<p>HMTB is the regional iwi authority representing 12 separate iwi with a tribal population of about 20,000. Each iwi elects an appointed representative for three years. HMTB are developing a plan to use their own natural sea, land based and freshwater resources so that they can access to their resources at scale for the Iwi marae communities located on the Coromandel and Hauraki Plains. This includes access and supply agreements for an agreed portion of mussels from marine farms, beef and other farm food products, fishing quota, hunting on forestry lands and use of common land for gardening. As the Iwi marae communities already own the food, the intention would be to distribute food rather than sell it.</p> <p>The intended outcomes of this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed food security plan for Hauraki iwi ensuring that Iwi marae community access healthy, affordable food and are involved in the production and processing of it. • Traditional Hauraki Māori food production knowledge & practices (land, bush, sea, freshwater) are maintained and shared with rangatahi. 	FSC \$40,000 over two years (additional \$267,000 from Response and Transition for other food distribution)	We visited this initiative in April 2021 and highly recommend it. HMTB has significant corporate food related assets and are tasked with increasing its social commitment of providing food security to whānau in their rohe. There are options to help fast track this mahi, such as funding a project manager.
Kai Rotorua	Rotorua & Murupara	<p>Kai Rotorua strive to reconnect communities to Papatūānuku and achieve food independence for a resilient, well-nourished, well-connected, sustainable Rotorua. Kai Rotorua has built community presence as well as credibility. Their focus is on building awareness, educating whānau and giving a helping hand to start their own food independence programme. They have achieved or are working towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established 66 free backyard gardens for whānau and kindergartens – 40 still to happen in Murupara • Gardening education in schools • Commercial food production (kumara, riwai Maori potato) • Community Fruit Rotorua established • Farmers market established • Supporting horticulture to be included into school curriculums <p>Scion (Crown research institute) are working with Kai Rotorua on a feasibility study around kumara extract to go into baby formula. If successful, Kai Rotorua in the longer term aims to become financially viable through commercial gain without government funding.</p> <p>Kai Rotorua :: Reconnecting us to Papatūānuku through kai.</p>	FSC \$20,000 over two years. BOP region is planning another contribution of \$5,000 to \$20,000 this year.	We visited Kai Rotorua in April 2021 and found them futuristic in their thinking and passionate about a food secure Rotorua. Ministry of Health Healthy Families programme is the major funder of this initiative. We note that MSD funding is comparatively small to date.
Hikurangi Enterprises (HEL)	Ruatorea	<p>Hikurangi Enterprises Ltd is a social enterprise 100% owned by Hikurangi Huataukina Trust (HHT). HEL operates a range of trading ventures with the goals of creating jobs for locals and income to fund HHT charitable activities.</p> <p>The Future is Whanau kai project is a Whanau Supported Agriculture project that will provide access to cheaper, healthier, and more nutritious kai by supporting local whanau growers. The aim is to increase local food resilience to ensure sufficient supply of appropriate and healthy kai.</p> <p>Hikurangi Enterprises is supporting the Tairawhiti Growers Collective to develop their members capability and increase their capacity to grow organic highly nutritious vegetables through an intensive market gardening system. The produce grown will be integrated into a kai box that will be delivered to whanau in the wider Ruatorea area. The Future is Whanau project is being trialled for 6 months from November 2020 – May</p>	CCRF \$70,000 over two years	We have not visited HEL. This is an excellent initiative by a capable and respected organisation that will achieve both food sovereignty and employment outcomes.

² Key: Food Secure Communities Grant Fund (FSC); Community Food Response Fund (Response); Community Food Transition Fund (Transition), Community Capability and Resilience Fund (CCRF).

		<p>2021 with intention to become permanent. The project pilot began with 100 whānau members in November 2020 and increase by 100 whānau by February 2021 and then scaling in the 2021/22 summer growing season.</p> <p>Expected outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau will be able to access healthier, more nutritious kai at a lower cost than currently available. Sustainable long-term employment will be created for local whānau on their own whenua Maori. Develop local food resilience for the Waiapu Valley. 		
Waitara Foodbank Pataka Kai	Waitara	<p>Waitara was originally a flourishing kai basket of food from its river that flows through the town to the ocean where traditional mahinga kai (natural resources) fed the people of Te Ati Awa. The surrounding fertile volcanic soils were home to large maara kai. The Pataka Kai are now working to map out the existing food sources available in the community, and get conversations going to come up with ideas to turn Waitara into a food basket, which supplies a sustainable source of nutritional food made possible through sharing skills and resources. Outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring food sovereignty back to whānau so they can feed themselves Less dependency on food bank, and food grants More whānau are growing their own kai or have access to mahinga kai <p>The Pataka Kai have started a monthly crop swap to promote active involvement towards self-sufficiency. They are also considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlords of properties to encourage gardens to be put into rental properties Local council to plant fruit trees in wide berms for Waitara and surrounding areas in North Taranaki Elderly knowledge holders in Waitara sharing their jam making recipes or net making skills <p>Vision to make Waitara a sustainable 'food basket' for all Stuff.co.nz</p>	<p>FSC \$20,000 over two years. (additional \$50,000 from Response & Transition for community food distribution)</p>	<p>We visited this initiative in December 2020. While this is at more nascent stages than some of the other initiatives listed here, it has strong leadership and is in a community of high need.</p>
Common Unity Project Aotearoa (CUPA)	Hutt Valley, Wellington	<p>CUPA have a long history of delivering innovative, sustainable, community-driven solutions to food security in the Hutt Valley. Their 'community food hub' includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Café: A place where local people can eat, share, connect and learn, transacting with time or money so everyone can participate. Local Food Production: The Urban Kai farm programme builds on community resources, assets and strengths to produce food locally and shorten food supply chains. They currently have 11 local farms, including at Rimutaka Prison, Epuni School, and a Housing NZ site. Local Food Cooperative: Run by local members, provides access to food, dry goods and locally grown produce at an accessible price. Community Kitchen: For food production, learning, education and connection. Learning Hub: Sharing to enable other communities to lead their own food resilience responses. <p>During lockdown CUPA were able to prepare ten of thousands of nutritious meals from their gardens, processed through their off-grid, shipping container commercial kitchen, to be distributed to vulnerable whānau throughout the Hutt.</p> <p>s9(2)(ba)(i) OIA</p> <p>Common Unity Project Aotearoa</p>	<p>Response \$300,000 over two years. FSC \$25,000 over two years.</p>	<p>We visited this initiative most recently in May 2021. CUPA are sector-leaders and are constantly innovating in the food security space. s9(2)(ba)(i) OIA</p>
Nelson Environment Centre (NEC)	Nelson	<p>Nelson Environment Centre run the kai rescue for Nelson. They have run this over several years and have noticed a steadily increasing demand for this service. They have also recognised the kai rescue and foodbanks can only do so much to alleviate food insecurity.</p> <p>As such they have explored what is possible in the food security space. They have teamed up with their regional public health service to pilot a fruit and vege co-op which will operate initially in one, low socio-economic suburb. This will be sited at Victory Community Centre (another FSC provider) and families will be able to opt in to weekly boxes at a discounted rate. They are learning from providers such as Wesley Community Action who pioneered the cooperative model.</p>	<p>Transition \$5,000 Response \$99,000 over two years (including for community food distribution).</p>	<p>We visited this initiative in November 2020. It has great leadership and skilled personnel involved. Their current funding is enough for a pilot in one suburb to prove the concept. While Regional Public Health is the major funder, further funding from MSD could allow them to expand the model to other suburbs.</p>
Community Focus Trust (CFT)	St Albans, Christchurch	<p>Community Focus Trust is based in St Albans in Christchurch. They have a range of services with a big focus on their fruit and vege co-op which sells 105 boxes per week for \$15. This has expanded into preparing food boxes to give out to those who need them and they also provide a range of food boxes to other NGOs who support vulnerable people and whānau in their neighbourhood.</p> <p>s9(2)(ba)(i) OIA</p> <p>Projects (empowerchurch.co.nz)</p>	<p>Transition \$11,000 Response \$200,000 over two years (including for community food distribution)</p>	<p>We visited this initiative most recently in April 2021. While this community is mixed in income levels, s9(2)(ba)(i) OIA</p>

