



# Coversheet

## **COVID-19 support for essential social sector services and communities**

**Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development**

These documents have been proactively released.

*8 June 2020, Cabinet paper - COVID-19 Emergency Welfare Response Transition: Report Back*

*8 June 2020, Appendix 1: summarised table on transitioning CDEM Group welfare support roles and functions*

*8 June 2020, Cabinet Business Committee Minute of Decision: COVID-19 Emergency Welfare Response Transition: Report Back.*

In June 2020, the Cabinet Business Committee considered a report back on the transition of welfare support for priority communities from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups to longer-term recovery led by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), in partnership with relevant agencies, iwi, local government, community partners and communities. The proactive release of the Cabinet paper and related documents help to show how the Government managed this transition.

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it. This is the key to the redaction code used for this release:

- Section 9(2)(f)(iv) – This information is under active consideration. The release of this information at this time would be likely to prejudice the ability of government to consider advice and the wider public interest of effective government would not be served.

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**Search Tags: non-government organisations, essential social sector services, communities, COVID-19**

## IN-CONFIDENCE

Office of the Minister for Social Development

Office of the Minister of Local Government

Office of the Minister of Civil Defence

Chair

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Report back on the COVID-19 emergency welfare response transition

### Proposal

1. This paper reports back on the transition of welfare support for priority communities from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups to longer-term recovery led by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), in partnership with relevant agencies<sup>1</sup>, iwi, local government, community partners and communities.
2. Beyond this immediate transition of CDEM functions, this paper also highlights how regional leaders are using the momentum and trust created through their collective response during the emergency to reset their ways of working and lead the recovery of their communities. The paper highlights how central government can support regional leaders to coordinate these recovery efforts and meet the needs of their communities.

### Government priorities

3. This paper supports the Government's response to COVID-19 by ensuring that the varied circumstances and needs of individuals, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities continue to be met as CDEM Groups transition out.
4. This paper supports the priorities in the Government's Economic Plan to:
  - i. support thriving and sustainable regions
  - ii. build closer partnerships with Māori, and
  - iii. deliver transparent, transformative and compassionate government.
5. It also supports the Government's Public Service Reforms commitment to create a modern, agile and adaptive Public Service.

### Executive summary

6. On 21 April 2020, the COVID-19 Ministerial group directed officials to report back with further advice on how welfare support for vulnerable communities

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant agencies throughout this paper refers to agencies such as the Department of Internal Affairs, National Emergency Management Agency, Oranga Tamariki, Te Arawhiti, and agencies represented on the Social Wellbeing Board (SWB) and the Caring for Communities Governance Group members (C4C). Chief Executives are meeting regularly as part of the COVID-19 response and have well established central leadership groups that exist in 'business as usual' times such as SWB and Economic CEs.

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

will be transitioned from the immediate emergency response led by CDEM to longer-term recovery led by the relevant social sector agencies, to avoid duplication and overlap and address any identified gaps.

7. This report back advises that CDEM Groups are gradually scaling back their emergency welfare functions and transitioning responsibility for delivering these functions (including supporting peoples' access to housing and food) to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), relevant agencies, iwi, local government and community partners. This transition is being supported at the national level by the Caring for Communities workstream<sup>2</sup> and will be eventually governed by the Social Wellbeing Board (SWB). **Appendix 1** details the transition plan for each of CDEM's welfare functions.
8. Collaborative regional and local responses have already been at the forefront of New Zealand's COVID-19 response and recovery effort. We have seen central government, CDEM Groups, iwi, local government, community partners, and Pasifika and ethnic community leaders working more collaboratively than ever before to meet the needs and support the resilience of their communities, whānau, hapū and iwi.
9. Throughout the COVID-19 response, MSD has already been working with relevant agencies, CDEM Groups, iwi, non-government organisations (NGOs) and community groups, both centrally and through existing regional structures and is well placed to continue this work.
10. Local government has played an important role in leading the response and has been at the centre of organising the community to support the most vulnerable. Local authorities have statutory responsibilities for response and recovery through their membership of CDEM Group Joint committees, and also have a statutory role to promote social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing in their communities under the Local Government Act. Local Government Chief Executives have expressed their desire to continue to work in partnership with central government agencies and other community partners in working towards recovery.
11. While it has been easier in some regions than in others, the COVID-19 response has provided a clear opportunity for iwi to work alongside local government and central government and they wish to continue to work in this way in the response and in the planning and implementation of recovery efforts.
12. Regions are generally working successfully to respond to needs and plan for recovery, and should be encouraged to continue doing this. Some regions are experiencing coordination and delivery challenges. These regions may need additional support from central government to coordinate recovery efforts and meet the needs of their communities. This paper

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<sup>2</sup> The Caring for Communities workstream is a national cross-agency workstream set up to ensure the welfare needs of individuals, whānau, iwi and communities are met during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been overseen by a governance group of chief executives and has used insights gained from communities to ensure that services across agencies, NGOs, CDEM Groups, iwi and community organisations are aligned and delivering results to communities, and ensured effective communication to priority groups. The governance for this workstream will transition to the Social Wellbeing Board in the coming month.

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

advises that existing structures, or those arising out of the response to COVID-19, will continue to lead and coordinate in regions.

13. In September 2019, 11 Regional Public Service Leads (Regional Leads) were appointed to bring together government agencies across the social sector, while strengthening connections with the skills and economic sectors (GOV-19-MIN-0063 refers). These officials are currently playing an important role in the COVID-19 response and, because of their existing role, will likely be appointed as members of the newly formed interim Regional Skills Leadership Groups (iRSLGs).
14. The Public Service should continue to strive to be modern, agile and adaptive. In this way, central government will further support recovery in regions through the existing Regional Leads' role and by making timely regional data available to inform recovery.
15. While Regional Leads will support central government coordination efforts at the regional level, at the national level, SWB will be responsible for resolving system issues and ensuring regional leaders have sufficient support.

### **As CDEM Groups step back, MSD, relevant agencies and community partners will respond to immediate welfare needs**

*CDEM Groups have led the coordination of emergency welfare support in their regions during the COVID-19 response*

16. Throughout the COVID-19 response, CDEM Groups have managed the coordination and delivery of emergency welfare assistance to people in need in their communities. To meet this high demand for emergency welfare support, CDEM Groups work closely with many agencies including regional and local government, NGOs, iwi/Māori and Pacific organisations.
17. CDEM Groups have particularly focused on providing emergency accommodation, food and other essential household goods and services. This support extends to many people in need, including for example to foreign nationals in Otago where over 4,500 requests for assistance have been received.
18. CDEM Groups have also supported quarantine and managed isolation facilities in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for New Zealanders and returning residents. Support for individuals and whānau in these facilities has included delivery of food and emergency supplies, such as children's clothing and toys, and provision of 'navigators' that facilitate access to essential information and specialist support services, such as psychosocial support and Māori service providers.
19. So far, more than \$16 million is known to have been incurred as emergency welfare support by CDEM Groups in meeting wider welfare needs. We expect this figure to continue to rise in coming weeks as further social impacts of COVID-19 emerge and once all CDEM Groups submit their claims.

*MSD, relevant agencies and community partners will take up responsibility for responding to immediate and ongoing welfare needs*

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

20. While CDEM Groups have a responsibility to manage and coordinate recovery after an emergency, given the scope and scale of consequences for COVID-19, the responsibility for leading recovery regionally does not sit solely with CDEM Groups. Responsibility for addressing the longer-term impacts of COVID-19, including a wide range of health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19, rests primarily with other government agencies, alongside local government, iwi, and NGOs.
21. CDEM Groups should not, and cannot, continue to coordinate and deliver welfare services during the longer-term recovery. However, they also cannot step back without recovery efforts being well transitioned in every region. This report back responds to this and identifies what the next steps will look like. Many of CDEM Groups' functions and services are delivered by volunteers and existing local authority staff, many of whom are returning or have moved back to their usual roles. CDEM Groups also need to refocus their efforts to ensure readiness and resilience in the case of future emergency events (including a potential return to higher COVID-19 Alert Levels).
22. As CDEM Groups step back, MSD, relevant agencies and community partners are taking up responsibility for delivering CDEM welfare functions where required.
23. This will continue to include a strong focus on meeting the needs of priority sub-population groups who we know are at particular risk from poor outcomes from the pandemic and its impacts. The groups that are most likely to require priority support include children and young people with greater needs, people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to age, and or existing and underlying health conditions (e.g. people aged 70 and over and/or have certain existing medical conditions), and some disabled people.
24. These priority groups all fall under priority populations who are disproportionately disadvantaged in their socio-economic wellbeing, such as Māori and Pacific people. These populations groups will require additional support to effectively meet their cultural and community needs and values, which is necessary to effectively improve outcomes and prevent entrenched disadvantage.
25. The All of Government analysis of the social impacts of COVID-19 will be presented to the Social Wellbeing Committee in June and will inform further thinking on regional recovery.

### *A risk-based approach is being taken to transition welfare functions*

26. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and MSD are taking a risk-based approach to transitioning away from the CDEM Group-led response for welfare. Under this approach, NEMA identified an indicative planning timeframe of two weeks following the start of Alert Level 2 (27 May 2020) for CDEM Groups to start the transition.
27. Numerous CDEM Groups have drafted and are implementing transition plans in partnership with MSD and other support agencies. However, the timing of planning and transition will be commensurate to the specific circumstances of each region. NEMA and MSD produced guidance for

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

CDEM Groups and MSD Regional Commissioners on this transition planning, to ensure the careful transfer of:

- i. emergency welfare support functions
  - ii. coordination of ongoing operational welfare arrangements ahead of any longer-term recovery arrangements being established.
28. CDEM Groups are working with the Caring for our Communities workstream and MSD regional leaders to decide the approach to the immediate transition in their region, based on the coordination mechanism and services in place to address ongoing needs. Ultimately NEMA and CDEM Groups will move to a monitoring role with limited staffing.

*Transition will consider workforce pressures and the need for collaboration*

29. MSD Regional Commissioners (RCs) and their community partners have reported varying degrees of readiness to transition CDEM Group welfare functions. This reflects the wide variability in the impact of COVID-19 on communities across New Zealand, the pressure on regional social sector workers to implement new policies and respond to increasing demand, and the complexity of some of the welfare issues at hand.
30. Some of the funding agreed through Budget 2020 will support MSD, relevant agencies and community partners to scale up operations to meet increased demand. The key challenge will be to ensure that the relevant government agencies, local government, iwi and community partners continue to work together to address regional welfare needs. We know from previous crises that support, including on-the-ground representation from other central government agencies, will also be required to support the ongoing response to welfare needs.
31. MSD already plays a significant role in our communities, beyond providing income support. Early on, MSD stood up Rapid Response Teams to support businesses, provide financial support and, alongside key agencies, stood up and administer wage subsidies in a nationwide effort. MSD's close connections to the community sector has supported local recovery efforts furthered by additional funding from Government and on the ground engagement. MSD has worked closely with CDEM Groups to coordinate outreach calls for older people and has supported central coordination through the National Crisis Management Centre. Work also continues to implement support for businesses and people in need, with a strong focus on reconnecting people into employment. MSD can continue to use its regional footprint and networks within communities, including RCs, Rapid Response Teams, contract managers and frontline staff, to respond to ongoing welfare needs with regional partners.
32. Homelessness, meeting food needs and supporting foreign nationals are three areas of greater complexity and uncertainty that require a carefully managed transition away from the CDEM response. Policy and delivery decisions may need to be taken before transition occurs for these functions. Some of the decisions taken through Budget 2020 will also support the Government's response to these issues. For example, MSD received \$32 million to support communities to become food secure while addressing additional demand on foodbanks, food rescue and other community food

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

services. The Minister for Social Development will keep Cabinet updated as this initiative is implemented.

33. Further detail on the transition plan for each of CDEM's emergency welfare functions is at **Appendix 1**. We recognise that central government regional leaders can only respond to welfare needs of priority groups if they have the mandate and levers to do so.

### **While responding to welfare needs is the immediate focus, regions are already thinking about the recovery of their communities**

34. Officials have undertaken extensive engagement with regional leaders (central government, local government, iwi, Pacific leaders, ethnic leaders and CDEM Groups) to understand existing structures, relationships in the regions and readiness to coordinate the recovery efforts in their regions.
35. As expected, regions are at varying levels of readiness. Regions report a cluttered landscape of existing initiatives, governance groups and structures, often as a result of previous attempts to instigate regionally-led or place-based economic and social projects. However, the response to COVID-19 has helped to clarify the core membership of these groups and this is likely to be reflected in the regional groups that lead the coordination of recovery efforts.
36. A few regions are well-placed with mature, existing governance arrangements that could, with the right support, quickly lead regional response and recovery. These regions have indicated they will require support to provide effective leadership and support to their communities through response and recovery. The types of challenges they have identified needing support to manage include not having the right data for planning, supporting people who are not engaging with services, having many local areas within large regions that have different needs and resourcing capability, and a lack of administrative and policy capability to progress strategic priorities.
37. Each region has developed slightly differently models with leadership sitting either with central government, local government or iwi or, in most cases, joint leadership. Some regions (e.g. Northland) have a single coherent governance arrangement able to lead region wide governance. Some regions have identified the need for wider variation (e.g. Bay of Plenty) where some localities within the region are more advanced in their recovery planning than others. This is to be expected given the size and variation between rural and urban and numbers of iwi in the regions.
38. Some of the existing leadership structures in regions are:
  - i. Northland Social Wellbeing Governance Group, chaired by the Chief Executive of the District Health Board and includes iwi, local government, the economic development agency and central government representatives. The governance group has indicated it is willing to lead the coordination of recovery efforts
  - ii. Tairāwhiti Rau Tipu Rau Ora has a governance group, co-chaired by the Mayor and Iwi Chair, that includes other iwi chairs, DHB and chairs from Trust Tairāwhiti, Gisborne Holdings Limited and Eastland Group.

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

The governance group sets the strategy and will agree a recovery plan. It is supported by a Chief Executives group (which includes central government regional representatives) that will coordinate an integrated recovery response.

- iii. West Coast has Te Tai Poutini Plan Committee; this group is made up of local government and iwi representatives with equal input and voting rights. The regional partners are collaborating to ensure continuity of welfare services to people impacted by COVID-19. The West Coast Intersectoral Forum may be used to coordinate the ongoing response between local partners.
39. All regions are in the process of establishing interim Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs), led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, that will support the regional labour market response to COVID-19. We are mindful of endorsing the current varied arrangements, including Regional Leads and RSLGs, rather than adding additional bureaucracy to an already crowded authorising environment.
40. While Regional Leads will support central government coordination efforts at the regional level, at the national level, the Social Wellbeing Board (SWB) will be responsible for governing the Caring for our Communities workstream, resolving system issues and ensuring regional leaders have sufficient support.

### *COVID-19 offers an opportunity to build closer partnerships with Māori*

41. Māori iwi / whānau efforts during COVID-19 are focusing on practical and timely support. Some organisations are acting as a hub for food and supplies for pakeke (older people) and for the most vulnerable whānau, including those who have lost jobs due to COVID-19. They have partnered with others, such as ethnic communities, to pool resources and support whānau. They see a real opportunity to continue this work with their regional partners given the excellent relationships formed during this work. They also have clear ideas around planning for recovery and wish to work alongside their communities to pool these ideas and partner on future planning. The expectation is that regional leaders from central government, local government and the community will work with iwi (including hapū and whānau) locally at both a strategic and operational level in COVID-19 recovery.

### *Pacific and ethnic communities' leadership can support local recovery*

42. Pacific communities in New Zealand are diverse. While having a smaller presence in some regions, the communities overall experience larger disparities in wellbeing compared to others. Pacific peoples live in different urban and regional locations, and varied approaches are needed in those locations to draw together cross-agency, community and local government resources.
43. Existing networks have been effectively mobilised throughout the COVID-19 response; for example, Pacific providers and churches provided food, health and social services support to families.



## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

44. Ethnic communities have organised themselves to support older people, including by acting as hubs for information, food and supplies for their most vulnerable community members. The social and cultural networks of migrant and refugee communities and their strong links with the wider community can be leveraged to support local and regional recovery.
45. Coordinated local approaches to recovery are critical to ensuring Pacific communities are well supported and existing disadvantage is not entrenched. Pacific values should inform how recovery is managed for Pacific communities. Key to recovery are relationships; they must be effective in Pacific community settings to realise Pacific aspirations and grow their contributions. There are also opportunities to build on the progress being made by Pacific providers towards an integrated model of care through a new pilot being developed by the Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education. This initiative will look to provide health, social services and education support for Pacific communities, as part of the recovery phase of COVID-19.
46. Pacific and ethnic leaders have expressed a desire to help their communities to continue to respond to COVID-19 and add to the thinking on planning for recovery. This is particularly important in areas of high Pacific and ethnic populations such as Auckland, Waikato, Wellington and key areas in the South Island.

### *Disabled peoples' voices are critical to ensuring suitable regional responses*

47. The impacts of COVID-19 will have a different and disproportionate impact on disabled people and their communities. Decision makers must ensure meaningful consultation with, and active participation of, disabled people and their representative organisations in all stages of the COVID-19 response and recovery.<sup>3</sup> The best way to do this is to include disabled people in the decision-making process and it is key that central government expect this of regional-led groups. This approach supports the Enabling Good Lives principles which can be used to guide regions' responses.<sup>4</sup>
48. Disabled peoples' perspectives can be included in different ways and individual regions are best placed to determine appropriate models for them. It could be through membership on regional groups or support from an advisory group. These structures already exist in many regions, for example, 22 councils have a disability advisory group and organisations such the Disabled Persons Assembly play a role in existing community decision-making. Ensuring the voices of disabled people and their communities are heard means we can identify and work to remove the additional barriers that disabled people and their whānau may face due to COVID-19 as well as addressing the longer-term impacts.

### *Budget funding directed to regions is an opportunity to coordinate delivery*

49. Many Budget 2020 and COVID Recovery and Response Fund initiatives to support COVID-19 response and longer-term recovery will be delivered

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations Report Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19 (May 2020) [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_on\\_persons\\_with\\_disabilities\\_final.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_on_persons_with_disabilities_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Enabling Good Lives Principles are self-determination, beginning early, person-centred, ordinary life outcomes, mainstream first, mana enhancing, easy to use and relationship building.

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

locally and will put significant additional pressure on regional and local leaders and providers. This includes around \$3 billion in employment, trades and apprenticeship initiatives.

50. Government agencies, local government, iwi/ Māori and their partners delivering funded programmes and services can build on the new ways of working and collaborating to reach the people who need support. Existing regional groups offer ready leadership and coordination points for this work. They will directly support the new, multiple and different needs of people, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities. Other relevant locally delivered initiatives that we are providing time limited investment for include:
  - i. *Investing in the resilience and recovery of communities affected by COVID-19 (\$36m over two years)* - A fund has been established to support community groups which support Māori, Pacific, refugee and migrant communities. This will enable these communities to respond to and more readily recover from the current and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.
  - ii. *Community connection services for high and complex needs clients (\$41m over two years)* - This initiative will provide connection services and direct support to whānau by investing an additional 125 Community Connector positions into the community enabling whānau (particularly those located in rural or isolated areas) to access information and services.
  - iii. *Investing in the resilience and recovery of providers affected by COVID-19* - This initiative provides short term funding for the capability and resilience of current providers not receiving Budget 2020 cost pressure funds, to enable them to respond to, and more readily recover from the current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19.

*Local government also has a mandate to partner in recovery*

51. Through the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019, Parliament reinstated local government's statutory purpose to promote "social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being". This has strengthened local government's role in the response, and work with central government agencies in regions and other partners in the longer-term recovery.
52. Local government can support social recovery through its provision of services and programmes, community development and facilities and amenities where communities come together. However, given revenue difficulties, and varying capability and capacity, central government will need to provide support to local government and co-contribute to shared priorities in regions to meet new and emerging issues resulting from the pandemic.

*Regional-level data is critical to inform recovery locally and in regions*

53. To ensure the ongoing success of regionally led recovery, it will be important that they have access to relevant and timely data. Officials will work in partnership with regional leaders to understand their data needs and make regional-level data available in an easy and actionable way.

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

54. This work builds on and supports other data initiatives, such as reporting under the Living Standards Framework, the Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) Community Wellbeing Service and Open Data infrastructure. Access could be provided through the data exchange that many social sector agencies already use, including in the COVID-19 response.

### Legislative implications

55. No legislation is required.

### Financial Implications

56. There are no direct funding implications of this paper.
57. Ministers have agreed to Budget initiatives that will support social sector agencies and community partners to meet the needs of our communities. Given uncertainty around the scale and duration of COVID-19 impacts, there is a risk that we will need further funding to respond to unmet welfare needs.
58. Additional funding will be needed to support the capability of the regions to lead recovery. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

### Impact analysis

59. A regulatory impact statement is not required for the proposals in this paper.

### Human Rights

60. The policy proposals are consistent with the rights and freedoms contained in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. It is also consistent with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) guidance around measures to reduce the impact of COVID-19.

### Population implications

61. The transition plan outlined in this paper will help ensure that the groups at particular risk from poor outcomes have access to the information and services they need to maintain wellbeing. This will include a strong focus on meeting the needs of priority groups at both populations and sub-populations levels who we know are at particular risk from poor outcomes from the pandemic and its impacts. The groups that are most likely to require priority support include children and young people with greater needs, people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to age, and or

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

existing and underlying health conditions (e.g. people aged 70 and over and/or have certain existing medical conditions), and disabled people.

62. For older people, there may be specific impacts due to prolonged isolation and digital exclusion that need to be factored into the transition, as well as for older workers (over 50) who tend to spend longer out of the workforce than the general population when they become unemployed, which can exacerbate their financial vulnerability both now and in later years.
63. It is important to note, these priority groups all fall under priority populations who are disproportionately disadvantaged in their socio-economic wellbeing, such as Maori and Pacific people. These populations groups will require additional support to effectively meet their cultural and community needs and values, which is necessary to effectively improve outcomes and prevent entrenched disadvantage. Across all groups, therefore, it is likely those 'at risk' will require multiple additional support types to meet the full range of their respective needs.

### **Treaty of Waitangi analysis**

64. There is an expectation from Māori leaders that Government will provide a stronger platform for Māori participation in the recovery and rebuild following COVID-19. This paper will move towards ensuring they have a clear voice within their regions, including in central government and local government.
65. Building closer partnerships with Māori is one of the Government's twelve priorities. The Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti describes closer partnerships with Māori as a means for embedding Māori perspectives into policy, programmes and services. Cabinet has approved principles for closer relationships and agencies are developing responses to this goal with support from Te Arawhiti. We consider that this work in the regions will establish stronger relationships with a view to imbedding Māori perspective into policy, programmes and services.

### **Disability perspective**

66. It is crucial that disabled people and their families are actively included in decision-making around the COVID-19 response and recovery. New Zealand is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD), which mandates the involvement of disabled people in decisions and issues that affect them.
67. Some disabled people are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Disabled people and their families are also over represented in categories such as poverty, social harm, isolation and mental health issues, so an equitable approach to recovery will mean that more resources are channelled to the people who need it most.
68. The Government has made commitments under the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, and particularly relevant to the COVID-19 response

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

and recovery are commitments made under Outcomes 3 – Health and Wellbeing, 7 – Choice and Control, and 8 – Leadership<sup>5</sup>.

### Consultation

69. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment, the Social Wellbeing Agency, the State Services Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, the Treasury, Oranga Tamariki, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, the Office for Seniors, the Office for Disability Issues, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the New Zealand Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have been consulted on this paper.

### Communications

70. MSD, the Caring for Communities workstream and CDEM/NEMA will provide appropriate communications support as needed.

### Proactive release

71. This Cabinet paper will be proactively released, with redactions made consistent with the Official Information Act.

### Recommendations

The Ministers for Social Development, Local Government and Civil Defence recommend that Cabinet:

1. **note** that on 21 April 2020 the COVID-19 Ministerial group directed officials to report back with further advice on how welfare support for vulnerable communities will be transitioned from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups to longer-term recovery led by the relevant social sector agencies, to avoid duplication and overlap and address any identified gaps
2. **note** that this report back has identified that Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups are gradually transferring responsibility for coordinating the welfare response over to the Ministry of Social Development, relevant agencies, iwi, local government, community partners and communities to coordinate and respond to ongoing welfare needs
3. **note** that the Ministry of Social Development is well placed to continue its current role in communities, drawing on its regional networks, employment services and community partnerships to lead the coordination of the ongoing welfare response
4. **note** that welfare support for foreign nationals is a key area for which there is no clear transition pathway from Civil Defence Emergency Management Group assistance

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<sup>5</sup> The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026 can be found at <https://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/>

## BUDGET - SENSITIVE

5. **agree** to direct the Department of Internal Affairs to provide advice to Cabinet by 15 June 2020 on a mechanism to provide in-kind support to foreign nationals impacted by COVID-19
6. **agree** to direct relevant officials to provide advice to Cabinet in support of wider policy work around employment, immigration, and border management to provide a sustainable resolution of issues related to foreign nationals in New Zealand impacted by COVID-19
7. **note** that collaborative regional and local responses have been at the forefront of New Zealand's COVID-19 response and recovery effort
8. **note** that regions are now focused on organising themselves to lead longer-term recovery efforts in their region and manage the different needs of people, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities
9. **note** that many Budget 2020 and COVID-19 Responses and Recovery Fund initiatives to support the COVID-19 response and longer-term recovery will be delivered locally
10. **note** that under the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019, local government has an important role in promoting social and cultural wellbeing as part of actions towards recovery
11. **note** that the Regional Public Service Leads' convening mandate to coordinate central government agencies in the regions and support regional priorities will be important in recovery, and that additional funding will be needed to support this role
12. **note** that the Social Wellbeing Board will govern the functions of the Caring for our Communities workstream and will be responsible for resolving system issues and ensuring regional leaders have sufficient support to lead recovery efforts in their communities

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Local Government

Hon Peeni Henare  
Minister of Civil Defence



# Cabinet Business Committee

## Minute of Decision

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*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

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### COVID-19 Emergency Welfare Response Transition: Report Back

**Portfolios**                      **Social Development / Local Government / Civil Defence**

On 8 June 2020, the Cabinet Business Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-20-MIN-0271]:

- 1        **noted** that on 21 April 2020 the COVID-19 Ministerial group directed officials to report back with further advice on how welfare support for vulnerable communities will be transitioned from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups to longer-term recovery led by the relevant social sector agencies, to avoid duplication and overlap and address any identified gaps;
- 2        **noted** that this report back has identified that CDEM Groups are gradually transferring responsibility for coordinating the welfare response over to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), relevant agencies, iwi, local government, community partners and communities to coordinate and respond to ongoing welfare needs;
- 3        **noted** that MSD is well placed to continue its current role in communities, drawing on its regional networks, employment services and community partnerships to lead the coordination of the ongoing welfare response;
- 4        **noted** that welfare support for foreign nationals is a key area for which there is no clear transition pathway from CDEM Group assistance;
- 5        **directed** the Department of Internal Affairs to provide advice to Cabinet by 15 June 2020 on a mechanism to provide in-kind support to foreign nationals impacted by COVID-19;
- 6        **directed** relevant officials to provide advice to Cabinet in support of wider policy work around employment, immigration, and border management to provide a sustainable resolution of issues related to foreign nationals in New Zealand impacted by COVID-19;
- 7        **noted** that collaborative regional and local responses have been at the forefront of New Zealand's COVID-19 response and recovery effort;
- 8        **noted** that regions are now focused on organising themselves to lead longer term recovery efforts in their region and manage the different needs of people, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities;
- 9        **noted** that many Budget 2020 and COVID-19 Responses and Recovery Fund initiatives to support the COVID-19 response and longer-term recovery will be delivered locally;

- 10 **noted** that under the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act 2019, local government has an important role in promoting social and cultural wellbeing as part of actions towards recovery;
- 11 **noted** that the Regional Public Service Leads' convening mandate to coordinate central government agencies in the regions and support regional priorities will be important in recovery, and that additional funding will be needed to support this role;
- 12 **noted** that the Social Wellbeing Board will govern the functions of the Caring for our Communities workstream and will be responsible for resolving system issues and ensuring regional leaders have sufficient support to lead recovery efforts in their communities.

Vivien Meek  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Phil Twyford  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon Tracey Martin  
Hon James Shaw

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet