



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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COVID-19: Proposed Community Response Package 2021

Portfolios **Education / Social Development and Employment**

On 27 August 2021, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that the impacts of the COVID-19 Delta variant in New Zealand and resultant Alert Level 4 measures are creating new challenges for access to food and essential services among certain communities;
- 2 **noted** that while demand was largely being met prior to lockdown, recent increases in demand for food and other psycho-social services are consistent with agency, provider and communities' experiences during lockdown in 2020;
- 3 **noted** that the Ministry of Social Development has re-prioritised funding from the Community Support Services appropriation to meet needs for food access, essential items and support for young people since Alert Level four restrictions started on 17 August 2021, and this funding is largely exhausted;
- 4 **noted** that te Minita mō Whānau Ora is considering whether any additional funding is required for Whānau Ora commissioning agencies;
- 5 **noted** that additional funding is needed to meet demand not met by other initiatives or agencies, demand throughout the country, specifically in Auckland, and demand not being met by the immediate response;
- 6 **noted** that responding early to meet specific community needs aligns with the government's objectives to keep New Zealander's safe from COVID-19;
- 7 **noted** that, due to the nationwide lockdown, the Ministry of Education has paused the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme and is expecting operating underspends to accrue at a rate of approximately \$400,000 per school day;
- 8 **agreed** to the fiscally neutral adjustment in paragraph 9 below to meet increased community need for food access and other essential services in response to the emergence of the COVID-19 Delta variant for two weeks;

9 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 8 above, with no impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 & outyears
Vote Social Development Minister for Social Development and Employment Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Community Support Services MCA Non-Departmental Other Expenses: Community Response to Adverse or Emergency Events	3.200	-	-	-	-
Vote Education Minister of Education Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA Non-Departmental Output Expenses: School Lunch Programme	(3.200)	-	-	-	-
Total Operating	-	-	-	-	-

10 **agreed** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2021/22 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;

11 **noted** that the remaining \$4 million funding required for the Community Response package will be reprioritised from within Vote Social Development;

12 **authorised** the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Social Development and Employment to make any required fiscally neutral adjustment as noted in paragraph 11 above, for the Community Response package.

Michael Webster
 Secretary of the Cabinet