



# Report

**Date:** 7 September 2021

**Security Level:** IN CONFIDENCE

**To:** Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment  
Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

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## **Draft paper - Government's response to increased ongoing demand for access to food and other essential wellbeing items**

### **Purpose of the report**

- 1 To agree to circulate the attached draft paper to the COVID-19 Ministers Group for their feedback.
- 2 Subject to changes responding to feedback, agree to lodge the final paper by 3pm, 8 September 2021 for the COVID-19 Ministers Group meeting on 9 September 2021.

### **Recommended actions**

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **agree** to circulate to COVID-19 Ministers the attached draft paper – Government's response to increased ongoing demand for access to food and other essential wellbeing items on 8 September 2021

**Agree/Disagree**  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for Education

**Agree/Disagree**  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development and Employment

- 2 **agree** to lodge the final paper - Government's response to increased ongoing demand for access to food and other essential wellbeing items by 3pm on 8 September 2021, for the COVID-19 Ministers Group meeting on 9 September 2021.

**Agree/Disagree**

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for Education

**Agree/Disagree**

Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development and  
Employment

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Marama Edwards  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Māori Communities and Partnerships

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Date

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Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for Education

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Date

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Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development and Employment

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Date

## **Government agencies have been responding to increased demand for support, particularly for food and other essential items**

- 3 Government agencies have reprioritised baseline funding and are using additional funding to target support for those requiring access to food and other essential wellbeing items, particularly in Auckland. Ongoing increased demand for support, however, has exceeded the ability of MSD to accommodate any further baseline reprioritisation.
- 4 On 27 August 2021, Cabinet agreed to reprioritise funds from Vote Education's Outcomes for Target Students Groups to Vote Social Development [CAB-21-MIN-0343 refers] in order to meet increased need for food access and other essential wellbeing items following the emergence of the COVID-19 Delta variant. This funding was intended to cover the need for the two-week period to 10 September 2021.
- 5 MSD estimates that there were approximately an additional 97,000 food parcels provided since the week prior to 17 August 2021, and this number continues to grow daily.

## **Additional funding is required to meet ongoing high demand**

- 6 It is anticipated that the Auckland region remaining at Alert Levels 4 or 3 will continue to result in the same type of surge demand for food parcels and wellbeing packs for the two weeks from 11 September 2021 as seen since 17 August 2021.
- 7 Additional funding required by MSD to meet the continued surge in demand for the next two weeks is expected to be \$6.1 million. This is anticipated to include:
  - s 9(2)(i)
  - \$2.986 million for a further 20,000 essential wellbeing packs to be funded through community connectors and other providers who have been delivering these services in the Auckland region since the move to Alert Level 4.
- 8 If agreed, this additional funding will be allocated based on priority population groups within the Auckland region. MSD anticipates that it will continue to weight support towards the Pacific community and more broadly to Māori and Pacific in higher areas of deprivation. This may include funding for iwi, hapū and marae for the purposes of food and essential item provision.
- 9 The attached joint draft paper seeks agreement to further reprioritise and transfer funds of \$6.1 million from Vote Education's Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA to Vote Social Development, to meet the ongoing need for food access and other essential wellbeing items to cover the two-week period from 11 September 2021, while Auckland is expected to remain at Alert Levels 4 or 3.

## **Next steps**

- 10 If you agree, as soon as possible circulate the draft Cabinet paper to COVID-19 Ministers for their feedback.
- 11 Subject to your agreement, the Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment will need to lodge the final Cabinet paper by 3pm, 8 September 2021, so that it can be considered at the COVID-19 Ministers meeting on 9 September.

REP/21/9/953

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