



# Report

**Date:** 12 May 2020

**Security Level:** IN CONFIDENCE

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

## Mitigating the social impacts of COVID-19

### Purpose of the report

- 1 This report outlines the anticipated social impacts of COVID-19, the groups who are likely to be most adversely affected and work underway across government social sector agencies to mitigate these impacts and improve wellbeing.

### Executive summary

- 2 As part of the All of Government (AOG) efforts to respond to COVID-19, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has undertaken a Rapid Evidence Review (the Review) on mitigating the immediate and medium-term social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19. The brief was undertaken in consultation with social sector government agencies and with MSD's Chief Science Advisor, Professor Tracey McIntosh.
- 3 The Review shows that COVID-19 will likely exacerbate inequalities already experienced by many socio-economically disadvantaged groups, as seen in other pandemics, such as Māori and Pacific communities, and disabled people. There are also new groups that will be affected (people who will be in isolation for prolonged periods such as older New Zealanders, people who enter quarantine or self-isolation quickly or unexpectedly, and people whose ethnic origin make them susceptible to racism or discrimination). There is also a group of people who are experiencing sudden, significant economic hardship for the first time, or are likely to as unemployment rises.
- 4 Many of these social impacts are long-term and early AOG monitoring of social impacts (presented weekly to the Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC)) shows that impacts are yet to fully emerge to the levels suggested by the Review. As such, there is a need to closely monitor these social impacts to ensure that the mechanisms in place are effective and that any emerging gaps can be identified and responded to.
- 5 There is also an opportunity to make more lasting change to address enduring social issues. The experience of recent months, and including events in 2019, shows that the Government can move quickly to implement a range of measures and supports when it is critical to do so. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the ability of NGOs, iwi, and Māori and community groups to respond to the needs of their local communities. This ability to work responsively and collaboratively in a time of crisis raises questions about what can and should be achieved under normal circumstances.
- 6 As Chair of SWC, you have an opportunity to test the Government's wellbeing agenda in light of these anticipated social impacts to ensure that priorities are in line with the areas of greatest need and that we capitalise on the innovation already underway to achieve lasting change.

## Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **note** the findings of the Rapid Evidence Review on the immediate and medium-term social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19
- 2 **note** that many social impacts will take time to emerge but monitoring activity is beginning to highlight areas requiring focus
- 3 **direct** the Ministry of Social Development, in collaboration with relevant agencies and the All of Government Caring for Our Communities workstream, to prepare a Cabinet paper for the Social Wellbeing Committee, providing an overview of the social impacts of COVID-19
- 4 **agree** to circulate a copy of this report to relevant social sector Ministers for their information.

YES / NO

YES / NO

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Nic Blakeley  
Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry of Social  
Development

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Date

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Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development

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Date

## Background

- 7 As New Zealand moves out of the immediate response to COVID-19 and looks ahead at economic and social recovery, many government agencies are working to understand and prepare for the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions during lockdown. As the pandemic has evolved, it has become clear that the response to support New Zealand's communities requires a unique and prolonged approach.
- 8 The Caring for our Communities workstream was established in early March 2020 as part of the AOG response to COVID-19 to ensure the welfare needs of individuals, whānau, iwi and communities are met during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have a particular focus on ensuring our priority communities are well supported.<sup>1</sup>
- 9 In addition to this report, Caring for our Communities has prepared a report back on how welfare support for vulnerable communities will be transitioned from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) to the long-term recovery led by the relevant social sector agencies (REP/20/5/494). That report informs you of the plan to transition responsibility for CDEM's welfare functions to key social sector agencies, alongside iwi and community partners, and to seek your feedback on a proposal to transition to centrally-enabled, regionally-led COVID-19 recovery models.
- 10 This report on social impacts puts forward an approach to understanding and responding to the needs of priority populations. This approach can contribute to a national framework for regionally led responses to COVID-19, tying in with SWC, Regional Public Service Leads and other relevant work streams including social inclusion. As SWC Chair, you have an opportunity to test the Government's wellbeing agenda in light of these anticipated social impacts and ensure that priorities are in line with the areas of greatest need. There is also the opportunity to make more lasting change to enduring social issues.

## The social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19 are interlinked and will likely have cumulative effects

- 11 As part of the AOG efforts to respond to COVID-19, MSD has led the development of a Rapid Evidence Review (the Review) on mitigating the immediate and medium-term social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19. The completed evidence review, attached as Appendix One, considers both the immediate and medium-term social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19 and discusses a range of mitigation options. The brief was undertaken in consultation with social sector government agencies and with MSD's Chief Science Advisor, Professor Tracey McIntosh.
- 12 The Review outlines four key areas of social impact:
  - 12.1 **the impacts of social disconnection, isolation and crowding** – the negative psychological effects associated with containment measures include poor mental health outcomes including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. These effects are likely to be exacerbated by additional stressors such as financial loss, and could continue for several years. Those who extend household isolation (due to age or underlying health conditions, for example) may experience enduring impacts of social disconnection, loneliness and household stress.
  - 12.2 **impacts on mental health** – the pandemic may increase the incidence of a range of mental health conditions, especially anxiety, depression, PTSD, and

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<sup>1</sup> Caring for Communities is overseen by a governance group of chief executives the Ministry of Social Development; The Office for Māori Crown Relations - Te Arawhiti; Oranga Tamariki; Kāinga Ora; Ministry for Pacific Peoples; New Zealand Police (the Deputy Commissioner: Māori, Pacific & Ethnic Services, not chief executive); National Emergency Management Agency; and Te Puni Kōkiri.

substance use disorders. Suicide risk may also be increased. Increases in unemployment are likely to lead to increases in material hardship that may lead to poorer mental health and stress.

- ## Interdependencies of social harm





## **Social impacts from COVID-19 are likely to differ across groups and some new groups will be impacted**

- 14 The Review highlights that the immediate and medium-term social impacts of COVID-19 will be particularly severe for already disadvantaged population groups and risks compounding existing socio-economic divides. Groups who have experienced prolonged periods of socio-economic inequity include Māori and disabled people<sup>2</sup>. These groups have often been the focus of social sector activity and the hardship they have already experienced – particularly in the context of social welfare, housing and employment – is likely to be exacerbated by COVID-19.
- 15 There are also new groups who will be affected by the specific characteristics of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:
  - 15.1 *People affected by prolonged isolation* – this group will include older people, people with underlying health conditions (including mental health conditions and addiction) and some disabled people who are self-isolating because of the acute health risks associated with acquiring COVID-19 and people who care for them. These groups may experience psycho-social impacts associated with prolonged containment measures.
  - 15.2 *People affected by unexpected/involuntary quarantine* – this group includes people who are required to quarantine themselves because they have come into contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, and returning New Zealanders placed into mandatory quarantine. These populations may experience psycho-social impacts associated with enforced containment.
  - 15.3 *People whose ethnic origin make them susceptible to racism and discrimination* – Chinese and East Asian ethnicities may be targeted due to the origins of COVID-19. Previous pandemics, such as Ebola and SARS, have shown that fear and anxiety fuel discrimination that may manifest through blame, shunning or isolation, and lead to racial abuse and hate crimes.
- 16 Another new group impacted by COVID-19 are people experiencing sudden significant economic hardship, or who are likely to do so in the coming year as unemployment rises, and who have not previously engaged with social welfare services. It is likely that the significant income disruption for many New Zealanders will make it harder to meet their current and future financial obligations, including servicing debts and saving for retirement. According to the OECD, even before COVID-19, 53 per cent of New Zealanders did not have sufficient liquid assets to live above the national relative income poverty line<sup>3</sup> for three months if their income were to suddenly stop; significantly worse than the OECD average.
- 17 Young people who have recently entered or are about to enter the labour market for the first time are, as group, particularly at risk from the economic downturn and unemployment. Early analysis of the recent growth in JobSeeker grants shows a concentration in growth for people in their 20s, many of whom had not previously

<sup>2</sup> Disabled people may be impacted by events that are specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as risks to the financial long-term viability of disability providers who provide essential services (e.g. care and support) as they reconfigure services, or have to close, and/or let staff go. Disability employment providers, including Business Enterprises who rely on the sectors hit by COVID-19 to employ disabled people, have also been impacted and this has led to redundancies.

<sup>3</sup> Relative income poverty is defined as a disposable income below half the national median. OECD. 2020. How's life? 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9870c393-en.pdf?expires=1587873897&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=0DFC9253E60C7D550CEA9A78A38056AE>

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engaged with the welfare system.<sup>4</sup> This trend is likely to continue as the economic impacts from COVID-19 grow.

- 18 This experience of the labour market is also coupled with a noticeable increase in mental health concerns for young people. Youthline COVID-19 Research showed that 72.7 per cent of respondents to a COVID-19 specifically commissioned survey aged 25 and under agreed that COVID-19 and the Lockdown has had an impact on their mental health. This is comparatively higher than for older age groups surveyed.<sup>5</sup>
- 19 Many older people are also at risk of financial hardship as a result of the economic downturn. Older workers who become unemployed tend to spend longer out of the workforce than younger workers.<sup>6</sup> The value of assets and income from investments, on which many older people depend on to supplement their New Zealand Superannuation (NZS), have also fallen significantly in many cases.
- 20 There is also likely to be considerable intersectionality among these groups, and priority populations will include people with a mix of characteristics (such as ethnicity, gender and age) that were themselves indicative of certain risks prior to COVID-19.
- 21 Common risk factors shared by many of these groups include:
  - increased likelihood of experiencing social and economic adversity such as low income and poverty (including in-work poverty)
  - disproportionate experience of the impacts of mental health and wellbeing
  - disproportionate experience of the impacts of economic downturn and recession.
- 22 Despite this intersectionality, the Review outlines that interventions need to be tailored because a one size fits all approach has been shown not to be effective and may further exacerbate persistent health and socio-economic inequalities.

### **Many social impacts will take time to emerge but monitoring activity is beginning to highlight areas requiring focus**

- 23 The full economic impacts of the pandemic are only starting to take effect and social impacts for many will not begin to manifest until after we move out of the higher alert levels and the prolonged economic impact begins to take hold. Estimates released by Treasury show that even in an optimistic scenario, where we spend a relatively short period moving down through the alert levels, could see unemployment peak at 13.5 per cent (currently estimated by MSD to translate into a peak of 327,000 people on Jobseeker support).
- 24 Evidence tells us we won't be able to see the full range of impacts straight away. There are a number of reasons for this, such as that the containment measures of Alert Levels 3 and 4 prevent people from seeking out sources of support, and temporarily hide some impacts from the public and government agencies. For example, many of the societal 'eyes' - teachers, General Practitioners, Emergency Services, neighbours, social workers and NGOs - have fewer opportunities to have visibility of issues such as children at risk of family violence and sexual violence. This means that normal monitoring channels are currently unavailable and the conditions for social harms grows.
- 25 Despite these limitations, we are starting to see some of the anticipated issues outlined in the Review emerge in information collected, including from the social impact monitoring that MSD has begun as part of the AOG work to monitor the broad

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<sup>4</sup> This group's share of new grants increased from 38% to 45% during the lockdown compared with the same period in 2019. (*The shifting composition of Jobseeker work-ready grants during lockdown*, MSD, May 2020)

<sup>5</sup> Youthline COVID-19 Research, Report of Results April 2020

<sup>6</sup> Older workers are generally defined as those aged 50 and over.

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range of impacts of COVID-19. As you know, this AOG reporting provided to Ministers, through SWC on a weekly basis, is based on a set of indicators that will enable us to monitor social outcomes that are of particular concern, including:

- 25.1 Financial and material wellbeing/hardship and the extent to which families are able to meet their basic essential needs, including receipt of financial assistance from MSD, wage subsidy take-up, foodbank demand and self-reported financial hardship. This will be exacerbated by the need to service pre-existing debts, such as car loans.
  - 25.2 Physical and mental health including indicators of anxiety and depression, calls to mental health and drug and alcohol helplines, police call-outs relating to mental health and suicide, and self-reported physical health.
  - 25.3 Safety and security, including a strong focus on family and sexual violence including calls to family and sexual violence helplines, Police family harm investigations, and Oranga Tamariki reports of concern.
  - 25.4 Social connections including indicators related to digital access, relationships with family and friends, and loneliness.
- 26 The recently established COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey being run by the Ministry of Health is also a key data source. This surveys over 300 New Zealanders per day, with the potential to report selected indicators on a daily basis, as well as monitoring trends over time during the lockdown period (e.g. deterioration in mental health). Although the Office for Disability Issues has begun a weekly survey to check in on disabled people during this period, there is a lack of data on the needs of disabled people and the measures required over the longer term.
  - 27 In addition to official statistics, we are starting to receive qualitative information from providers and community groups that tell the story of what is being experienced on the ground. These insights are an important addition to quantitative data.
  - 28 A copy of the social impact segment from the AOG monitoring report, based on the available information, is provided in **Appendix Two**. As anticipated, it demonstrates that many economic impacts have become evident more quickly than social impacts. Income-related impacts on food security, for example, are immediately visible, while data on personal safety appears to confirm that there may be delays in reporting and visibility of these impacts.
  - 29 We will continue to monitor these social impacts closely and as more information becomes available. For example Treasury, in collaboration with MSD, Stats NZ and the Social Wellbeing Agency, are working to explore the potential to bring a wellbeing approach to data collection and monitoring through the economic recovery by utilising the Living Standards Framework.
  - 30 It is important that we stay close to information coming to us in order to understand the lived reality of communities and priority populations. Without understanding this reality, we cannot prepare and respond effectively to emerging needs.

**There is considerable activity across government to mitigate social impacts consistent with the evidence of need**

- 31 As part of the immediate response, many government agencies have embarked on activities to mitigate the immediate social impacts associated with the lockdown period. These activities include:
  - a national psychosocial and mental wellbeing recovery plan, supported by Government's investment of \$15 million in public messaging about wellbeing, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drug use; digital and app-based self-help tools and resources; and expansion of telehealth supports (Ministry of Health)
  - establishing a 'Network of Networks' to support priority groups (Caring for Our Communities workstream, supported by MSD and other government agencies and social services organisations)

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- boosting crisis support services for family violence, including managing phone lines, meeting additional demand for services, and helping women and children access alternative accommodation should refuges be full (MSD, Joint Venture on Family Violence and Sexual Violence)
  - boosting funding to financial support services such as the MoneyTalks helpline (MSD)
  - funding to support community resilience via community groups, providers, and NGOs, who are often best placed to meet the immediate needs of their communities (MSD, Department of Internal Affairs)
  - work to support the wellbeing of prisoners, for whom social distancing measures in prison can mean disruption to recreation time, health services (including mental health), parole hearings and visits from family and friends – work is also underway to support people released from prison during lockdown (Corrections)
  - finding accommodation for rough sleepers or homeless people in accommodation such as night shelters who were not able to practice social distancing, making them especially vulnerable to COVID-19 (MHUD, MSD, MBIE and others)
  - mobilising and pivoting Whānau Ora to provide support ranging from care packages to more complex navigational support as economic and psychosocial pressures increase (Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency).
- 32 It is worth highlighting that some initiatives undertaken in response to COVID-19 are likely to result in positive social impacts in the long run, such as the provision of digital connection for school-aged children. Other initiatives provide a unique opportunity to address perennial issues deemed impossible or unfeasible such as the housing of rough sleepers and homeless at alert levels 4 and 3.

**The collaboration that we have seen to date – particularly from iwi, communities and NGOs – will be a critical component of the ongoing response and recovery efforts**

- 33 Communities have mobilised rapidly in response to the crisis, including ensuring public health messaging is practically explained and translated where appropriate, standing up community testing stations (e.g. South Seas Health Care and Kaitiaki Testing Stations), preparing and delivering essential goods packages (e.g. Whānau Ora Commissioning agency-led hygiene, care and food packages); and ensuring supports to maintain community resilience remain available (e.g. Vodafone and Spark have reached out to the government to ensure the right websites are zero-rated and low-cost internet options are available).
- 34 The contributions of our Treaty partner are particularly worth highlighting. Māori (and Pacific peoples) have historically suffered a disproportionate impact from influenza, both during early contact with Europeans, and in the 1918 epidemic. Together with contemporary high-risk factors, this means Māori leadership is especially focused on a proactive public health response and management of ongoing economic and social impacts.
- 35 Many iwi have played a significant role in supporting Māori within their respective rohe, showing agility to mobilise and organise effectively as well as being better connected than government to hard to reach individuals, households, and communities. The immediate focus has been to ensure that whānau have access to essential services and supplies. Māori communities are responding to COVID-19 and the long-term underlying issues both conventionally, and through the Māori world lens of “protecting the whakapapa”. It is important, though, to note that not all communities are equally resourced to mobilise in the same manner. Daily iwi/Crown engagement has meant quick cut through on issues and that the Government COVID-19 response (including the specific Māori funding package) can incorporate iwi concerns.
- 36 As we prepare for the reset and revitalise phase of the economic and social response to COVID-19 there is an opportunity to build on efforts of the immediate response.



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Such an approach would mean not returning to the 'Business as Usual' mentality, but rather transitioning to a new approach that capitalises on the ingenuity and collaboration of the past two months in the way government works across New Zealand, including:

- 36.1 **in partnership with iwi and Māori communities** - the Iwi Chairs, through Te Arawhiti, have been clear that they want to be a partner in planning and local decision-making that affects their people and rohe. A redoubling of efforts to reset the Crown's relationship consistently across all iwi and Māori communities who seek partnership is critical, or we risk losing any gains made over recent years to reduce inequities.
- 36.2 **through nationally enabled, but locally led change** - the transition from the immediate emergency response led by Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) to longer term recovery led by the relevant social sector agencies, presents the best opportunity to put into practice the objectives of the Public Service Reforms to improve the way central government works in order to promote integrated services and support regions to set priorities and drive change.
- 36.3 **in collaboration with the NGO and philanthropic sectors** - the immediate response to COVID-19 required government agencies to work with providers in a flexible and streamlined manner to address urgent community needs; putting the Social Sector Commissioning work programme straight into practice. There is an opportunity to maintain that momentum and realise a future vision for how the different parts of the social sector can work together on a shared commitment to driving innovation in services to achieve outcomes.

**There are opportunities to oversee the Government's wellbeing agenda in light of the anticipated social impacts of COVID-19, and to make lasting change to enduring issues surrounding social wellbeing**

- 37 As New Zealand moves out of the immediate response to COVID-19, it is clear that efforts to mitigate social impacts and support New Zealand's communities require a unique and prolonged approach.
- 38 Working to mitigate these social impacts provides us with the opportunity to adopt some of the mentality and innovation used while responding to the immediate COVID-19 crisis and continue making lasting change to enduring social issues such as homelessness and insecure housing, family violence, suicide, child poverty, poor mental health and the inequalities that have long persisted. The experience of recent months, and including events in 2019, shows that the Government can move quickly to implement a range of measures and supports when it is critical to do so. This ability to work so responsively and collaboratively in a time of crisis raises questions about what can and should be achieved under more normal circumstances.
- 39 In your role as SWC Chair, you have the opportunity to oversee the Government's priorities and wellbeing agenda in light of the anticipated social impacts of COVID-19 and ensure that responses are evidence-based and tailored to the needs of communities. Effective post COVID-19 recovery will require a continued collaborative approach and up-to-date information on social impacts as they emerge.
- 40 The table at **Appendix Three** provides additional information about what government agencies are hearing from across their own networks and also outlines further opportunities to consider a re-balancing of programmes mitigating the medium-term social impacts across different population groups.
- 41 We propose that you direct MSD in collaboration with relevant social sector agencies and the Caring for Our Communities workstream to prepare a Cabinet paper, in conjunction with the All of Government Caring for Our Communities workstream, that provides an overview of the social impacts of COVID-19.
- 42 This approach could assist in setting the scene (acting as a 'chapeau paper') for further analysis of the social impacts of COVID-19 on particular cohorts and cross

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cutting themes. We would expect a tailored paper for SWC would provide an overview to be followed by more focused reports on mitigating social impacts on particular cohorts and cross-cutting themes, presented by the relevant Ministers. These reports could include:

- 42.1 **child and youth focused analysis and advice** in line with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (CYWS), with advice on how to respond to new needs and community partnership opportunities, including actions that could form part of an Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (OTAP). The OTAP is itself an action under the CYWS that will set out a plan by children's agencies for improving the wellbeing of the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki.
- 42.2 **homelessness and housing**, including more co-ordinated services and supports for people across the lower end of the housing market with a focus on a sustainable housing solution.
- 42.3 the **psychosocial response and recovery planning** led by the Ministry of Health as well as the whole-of-government response to the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction.
- 42.4 an update on the efforts of the **Joint Venture for family violence and sexual violence**, including those actions needed to ensure the right supports and services are available, including actions on the prevention of family and sexual violence.
- 42.5 responding to the needs of **Māori**, with reference to COVID-19 exacerbating long-term underlying issues, and a work programme to include a focus on community resilience and economic sustainability.
- 42.6 a report on **disabled people**, which will focus on the accessibility work programme to support disabled people and other population groups through the COVID-19 period and beyond (currently anticipated for June).
- 43 These additional reports to SWC would provide more detail about the known social impacts as they continue to emerge, the main community and government responses, particular areas of concern, and what work can be galvanised to bring about more lasting change.

## Next Steps

- 44 We will provide you with further briefings and an opportunity to discuss this report with officials at your next meeting with MSD Officials in the week of 18 May.
- 45 If you consider a chapeau paper to SWC of value, we can have a paper prepared for you to circulate for Ministerial consultation this week and consideration by SWC in late May.
- 46 A copy of this report will also be circulated to members of the Social Wellbeing Board for noting for its meeting of 20 May 2020.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Rapid Evidence Review on mitigating the immediate and medium-term social and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19

Appendix 2 – Social Impacts section of the AOG Weekly Monitoring Report (5 May 2020)

Appendix 3 – Activities and social impacts by population group

File ref: REP/20/5/513

Author: s 9(2)(a) OIA Senior Analyst, Policy Group

Responsible manager: Laura Crespo, Acting Director Strategic Issues & Investment



# Report

**Date:** 27 May 2020

**Security Level:** IN CONFIDENCE

**To:** Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development

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## Treatment of redundancy payments - update

### Purpose

- 1 This report provides an update on our investigation into the treatment of redundancy payments.

### Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **Note** we have found no systemic issue in how MSD have treated redundancy payments
- 2 **Note** that our policy guidance, training and IT system is accurate and reflects the Social Security Act 2018 (the Act) and Social Security Regulations 2018 (the Regulations).
- 3 **Note** that a sample of cases have been reviewed and a small number of errors have been found.
- 4 **Note** the actions MSD will take to address previous errors and mitigate the risk of further mistakes which includes clarifying our core MAP guidance and carrying out internal communications to staff to ensure staff know how to treat redundancy payments
- 5 **Note** that MSD has developed a process to manage queries from people who contact us if they believe their entitlement or commencement date has been incorrectly assessed
- 6 **Note** that MSD is reviewing 355 queries that we have received (as at 25 May) in relation to the treatment of redundancy payments
- 7 **Note** that we will provide you with an update on our progress in July.

  
Viv Rickard  
DCE, Service Delivery

28/05/2020  
Date

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Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Minister for Social Development

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Date

## **Background**

- 2 On 15 May 2020 we provided you with a report which outlined why we do not believe there is a systemic problem with how MSD treats redundancy payments. This was based on the fact that our policy guidance, training and IT system is aligned with the Act and Regulations [REP/20/5/532].
- 3 The report also included findings of a small sample of 38 cases where some errors were found, but showed that generally, decision making was consistent with our policy guidance, and that it reflected the rules in the Act and Regulations.

## **Updated sample and findings**

- 4 MSD has reviewed a further random sample of 185 client files where there was potential for a redundancy payment to be assessed incorrectly.
- 5 Of the 185 client files reviewed, 2.7 percent were found to be incorrectly assessed:
  - 56 clients (30.3 percent) received a redundancy payment
  - 51 of the 56 clients (91.1 percent) did not have their redundancy payments included when determining entitlement or commencement date, and therefore were assessed correctly
  - 5 of the 56 clients had redundancy payments included in the assessment of their entitlement or commencement date and therefore have been incorrectly assessed.
- 6 The findings of this updated sample reiterate the findings from our earlier report. For the majority of cases we sampled, MSD are following the rules and there is not an issue with the treatment of redundancy payments.
- 7 For the 5 cases from our updated sample that have been incorrectly assessed, we will investigate further, and any errors will be addressed.

## **Next Steps**

- 8 MSD has discussed the issue and findings with the National Benefit Advocates and Community Law, and will continue to work with them as this work progresses.
- 9 We will address any errors that are found in cases that come to our attention and mitigate the risk of further mistakes. We will prioritise those people who are currently on benefit.

### *Process for correcting errors*

- 10 MSD has implemented a process to manage queries in relation to the treatment of redundancy payments.
- 11 The process includes a form which a person can complete if they think MSD has made a mistake in their benefit calculation with respect to redundancy payments.
- 12 The process, form and key information explaining exactly how redundancy payments are treated will be available on our website by the end of the week.
- 13 As at 26 May, MSD has received 355 queries which we are working through. We will provide an update on progress in July.

### *Clarifying MAP*

- 14 We are preparing improvements to our core MAP guidance. An extensive review of our core policy guidelines confirms that the information available to staff accurately reflects the rules, however we will be improving the structure and flow of information to provide the highest degree of clarity to staff. A consolidation of all the information into one place is also underway. This will ensure staff will know exactly how to treat redundancy payments, so to minimise any further errors.



*Website content*

- 15 We have reviewed our website content and ensured it accurately reflects policy and current rules. We will update our website with information relating to the process, form and key information.

*Stakeholder communications*

- 16 Internal communications will be issued to staff with information clarifying the rules and policy relating to the treatment of redundancy payments. The communications will also include details on the process, form and key information to manage the queries we receive.
- 17 We will work with your office on our communications to external stakeholders.

REP/20/5/558

Author: 9(2)(a) – Lead DCE Advisor, Service Delivery

Responsible manager: Dr Simone Bull – Director DCE Office, Service Delivery

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### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #49

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	49
		Date	30 April 2020
CC	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Time	1600
	MSD Distribution		
Level	Level 3	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency

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<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 29 April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 543,952 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 430,745 have been approved, supporting 1,709,048 people</li> <li>• \$10.541b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 7,492 applications pending</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23,404 calls were answered across Work and Income, Seniors, Studylink, Housing and Wage subsidy contact centres</li> <li>• 97,451 logins to MyMSD online service</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 29 April, MSD has received a total of <b>543,952</b> applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (<b>2,369</b> new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Subsidy <b>288,821</b></li> <li>• Modified wage subsidy <b>224,785</b></li> <li>• Leave payment <b>26,140</b></li> <li>• Essential Worker <b>4,205</b></li> </ul> <p>Of these, 430,745 have been approved, 34,718 have been declined, and 70,997 have been closed. A total of <b>\$10.541 billion</b> has been paid to date benefiting a total of <b>1,709,048</b> (<b>1,492,680 employees and 216,368 Sole Traders</b>).</p> <p>On Friday 24 April, an expansion of the COVID-19 leave support for workers was announced. Under the broadened criteria, the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme will be available to all businesses, organisations, and self-employed people, not just essential services. <b>This is on track to go live tomorrow, Friday 1 May, at 12pm.</b></p> <p>A dedicated MSD investigations team is working with IRD and MBIE to carry out an assurance and audit process of the wage subsidy scheme. This work is overseen by a team of 104 fraud experts and investigators. The audit process will identify cases that may require investigation. As at 24 April, MSD had completed 2,435 random and targeted audits, resolved 88 of 292 allegations received, received \$6.9m of \$16.2m in voluntary refunds, and requested</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p>refunds from 56 applicants totalling \$168,000. <b>We are receiving more voluntary refund requests than we can currently process.</b></p> <p><b>Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a strong focus on helping people into employment and we expect many of our new clients will be work-ready.</li> <li>• MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and <b>Keep New Zealanders Working</b>. These initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Rapid Return to Work Service – a new phone service for clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19, giving practical support with CV writing, skills assessment, job market navigation and connection with current vacancies.</li> <li>○ Opening 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online. These sites are closed to the public.</li> <li>○ Our Employer Engagement Campaign – engagement with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to gather intel and promote services available to them and their staff. This initiative is region-based.</li> <li>○ A new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work. Employers will be able to list jobs on the platform and anyone looking for work (both MSD and non-MSD jobseekers) will be able to register and apply for them directly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b>	<p><b>Our sites will reopen under Alert Level 2. Planning is underway, considering cleaning standards, security needs, signage, guides for our staff and clients, how many sites will be open, how the appointment process will work, and how to control access.</b></p> <p>National Office will see more staff coming back to work as we move into Alert Level 2. We are considering how we can support some staff back into the office, while also ensuring physical distancing rules stay in place. <b>Some staff have been feeling anxious about coming back into the office, so work is being done on how we can support their mental health and wellbeing.</b></p> <p>We are also thinking about how we can continue to support our staff working from home – with physical tools, digital tools, communications and training, and health, safety and wellbeing.</p>
<b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</li> <li>• Teams of MSD staff have been redeployed to process the large volume of subsidy applications received. MSD has hired <b>299</b> new staff for client facing roles and <b>388</b> in total, since 18 March.</li> </ul> <p><b>We expect benefit applications to increase going forward. We have begun considering what our future demand might be, when it will land, how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. Work to streamline the application process continues.</b></p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We have been working hard to get wait times down across our phone lines, so our clients can quickly access help. Call volumes remain high</b></li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p>– however, average wait times across all lines yesterday was approximately 5 minutes, down from more than two hours at their peak.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased wait times were due to increased call volumes, after the long weekend and move into Alert Level 3. We returned wait times to normal levels yesterday.</li> <li>High levels of online service continue. On 27 April, there were 97,451 logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>To date, MSD has had 67 sites impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>From 19th March up to 29 April, a total of 116 staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, 107 have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining 7 are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new family violence campaign – It's Still OK to Ask for Help – began yesterday, 29 April. It's delivered by MSD's It's not OK campaign team, and is part of the Joint Venture family and sexual violence response to COVID-19.</li> <li>Ads will play on television, radio and in digital and social media channels. The campaign links people to the Family Violence information line and safebubble.org.nz</li> <li>This phase will be quickly followed by more targeted messages for victims and perpetrators and different communities and populations, all encouraging people to seek help. A third phase will focus on strategies and messages for men worried about using violence.</li> <li>To date 123 grants totalling \$5.25m have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</li> <li>We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provision of Food</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the community funding package, MSD offered interim funding to foodbanks until CDEM funding mechanisms are established and meeting funding needs.</li> <li>MSD has approved interim funding totalling \$260,000 to support foodbank organisations. Primarily food requests will now be managed by CDEM, with MSD continuing to bridge the gap where the provider does not meet CDEM criteria.</li> <li>We are planning further work regarding a longer-term food security strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSD continues to meet regularly, alongside other agencies, with the Iwi Chairs Forum, to discuss operational needs and responses, along with future focused strategic activity.</li> <li>We have ongoing information coming through E Tū Whānau and Pacific providers about the on the ground issues that community networks and groups are seeing. Where there are specific issues around provision of essential items, we connect our providers with</li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p>CDEM, provide funding directly and or make sure that they know about the Community Awareness and Preparedness Grant fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSD will distribute \$3.5 million in funding over the next six months to support providers assisting Māori and Pacific families to meet increased costs.</li> <li>Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 39 groups totalling \$990k. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Acute welfare needs in Queenstown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local CDEM group is now conducting needs assessments for all foreign nationals in Queenstown.</li> <li>MFAT is working closely with foreign missions to ensure support is provided for this group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is beginning on a Ministry-wide Alert Level 2 communications approach for staff, clients, and providers.</li> <li>We are promoting our Keep New Zealand Working package, on social media and the Work and Income website.</li> </ul>
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### All of Government Contribution and Support

<p><b>Community – Vulnerable Communities</b></p> <p>Wider welfare status and response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the <i>Where to go for Services and Support</i> guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>As at end of day Wednesday 29 April, around 106,320 calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately 3,000 (2.8%) have been referred for support services.</li> <li>We have now completed 88% of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. Calls to other priority groups of older clients have started, with around 5,900 calls made to date.</li> <li>Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with 2,730 calls made for older Maori, and 358 calls made to older Pacific peoples.</li> </ul> <p><b>In-home childcare for essential workers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As at 30 April \$2.6m has been committed to the delivery of childcare services. This has reduced from last week (\$3.33m), as a number of providers have sought to reduce their contracted hours due to lower parent demand or workforce constraints. This also factors in the additional funding required for the extended period of two weeks.</li> <li>Consideration is underway as to extending the contract beyond 8 May. We have also started working through Alert Level 2 options in this space.</li> <li>Under Alert Level 3, MSD is continuing to fund providers to deliver in-home childcare (for 5 to 14 year-olds) for COVID-19 essential workers.</li> <li>The service is fully funded until 8 May 2020.</li> </ul>
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## In-Confidence

### ***Essential social service providers***

- There are 917 approved essential social services who will continue to be able to support communities under Alert Level 3.
- The second drop of PPE to providers will be complete by EOD tomorrow.
- Our focus is on continued support to providers to respond to their community's immediate needs.
- We are continuing to maintain the essential services register through alert level 3 to ensure that we are prepared if we need to revert back to alert level 4 and to ensure.
- We are starting to get in touch with providers who will be able to provide services in Alert Level 2, to find out what their capacity is.
- Through the funding allocated to disability services we have approved \$2.9m which is supporting almost 68,000 people. This funding is used to support disabled people's wellbeing through the continuation of vocational day services in different formats over the next six months. There will be no change to this scheme under Alert Level 3.

### ***Housing***

- We have prepared staff in our regions to respond to a likely increase in demand for emergency housing as we move into Alert Level 3.
- Under Alert Level 3, housing needs assessments will be completed by a small (virtual) centralised team, and will only be done for people living in emergency housing.
- We will also focus on re-commencing placements into Public and Transitional Housing.
- MSD and HUD have provided advice to Housing providers to support the safe re-commencement of placements into Public and Transitional housing in line with Ministry of Health guidance.
- MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service has agreed to share information with MSD on the projected numbers of people arriving in NZ and updates on repatriation flights coming into Wellington and Christchurch so that MSD can support that activity.



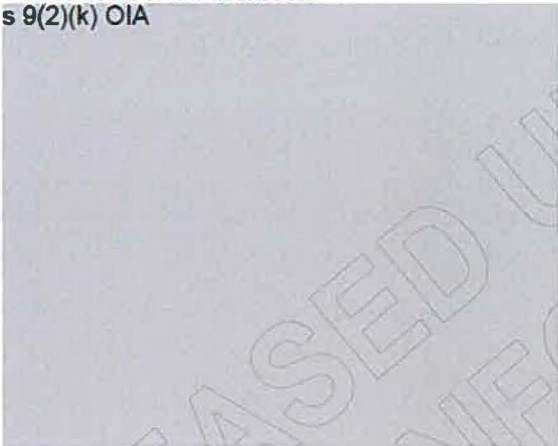
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M: <a href="#">[redacted]</a>
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	Comms team	[redacted]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>	

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA





## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #50

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	50
		Date	4 May 2020
CC	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Time	1700
	MSD Distribution		
Level	Level 3 – Restrict	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency

## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 3 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 550,050 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 435,875 have been approved, supporting 1,720,008 people</li> <li>• \$10.6b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 6,608 applications pending</li> </ul> <p>On 3 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60,473 logins to MyMSD online service</li> <li>• Our call centres were closed yesterday, Sunday 3 April.</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 3 May, MSD has received a total of 550,050 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (922new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Subsidy 288,822</li> <li>• Modified wage subsidy 230,469</li> <li>• Leave payment 26,141</li> <li>• Essential Worker 4,423</li> <li>• Leave Support 195</li> </ul> <p>Of these, 435,875 have been approved, 35,603 have been declined, and 71,964 have been closed. A total of \$10.6 billion has been paid to date benefiting a total of 1,720,008 (1,501,039 employees and 218,969 Sole Traders).</p> <p>The expanded Leave Support Scheme successfully went live on Friday 1 May.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>The online recruitment tool is off to a great start. As of 12am 4 May there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,094 job seekers</li> <li>• 181 employers</li> <li>• 2,438 job vacancies</li> <li>• 31 jobs successfully filled in under a week.</li> </ul> <p>Our focus this week is undertaking a stocktake of how well these initiatives have been tracking, and working with our frontline staff to ensure good and continued use of these tools.</p> <p>As benefit numbers continue to increase, we are seeing higher rates of people entering the benefit system who have never been on a benefit before. This includes some higher skilled groups requiring a different service levels than MSD's more traditional client groups.</p>
<p><b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b></p>	<p>This week, we are expanding our health and safety guidelines under Alert Level 2 for staff working from home, as well as guidance for our leaders to help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2.</p> <p>Work on the readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing. This week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team will confirm which sites will reopen</li> <li>• We will finalise:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our site opening plan</li> <li>○ site capacity</li> <li>○ our staff plan</li> <li>○ security arrangements</li> <li>○ and health &amp; safety guides (including hygiene, physical distancing and contact tracing).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b></p>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p> <p>Teams of MSD staff have been redeployed to process the large volume of subsidy applications received. MSD has hired <b>299</b> new staff for client facing roles and <b>388</b> in total, since 18 March.</p> <p><b>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward.</b> Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. <b>We have drafted a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand. This paper is with senior leadership for approval.</b></p>



## In-Confidence

	<p>Work to streamline the application process continues. As of <b>Sunday 3 May</b>, <b>clients are now be able to upload their own, or their partner's, documents into MyMSD when they apply for a main benefit or pension.</b></p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our call centres were closed yesterday, Sunday 6 May.</b></li> <li>• High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were <b>60,473</b> logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>• To date, MSD has had <b>68 sites</b> impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>• From 19th March up to 4 May, a total of <b>135</b> staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, <b>127</b> have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining <b>6</b> are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date 123 grants totalling <b>\$5.25m</b> have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</li> <li>• We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We are continuing to connect with our ethnic communities over the radio. We have set up one interview per day this week, with various communities.</b></li> <li>• Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 39 groups totalling \$990k. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>• Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Acute welfare needs in Queenstown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local CDEM group is now conducting needs assessments for all foreign nationals in Queenstown.</li> <li>• MFAT is working closely with foreign missions to ensure support is provided for this group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Across our social media channels, we have been promoting our It's Still OK to Ask for Help campaign and information on how to apply for a food grant on MyMSD.</b></li> <li>• <b>We continue to reach out to our regions via radio. Our regional commissioner in Taranaki and King Country has been interviewed on various local radio stations, promoting our services and programmes available for businesses and individuals.</b></li> <li>• <b>Work is continuing on an Alert Level 2 communications approach for staff, clients, and providers.</b></li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

### All of Government Contribution and Support

#### Community – Vulnerable Communities

#### Wider welfare status and response

Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the *Where to go for Services and Support* guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.

#### **Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients**

- Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.
- As at end of day Sunday 3 May, around **111,240** calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately **3,120** (2.8%) have been referred for support services.
- We have now completed **91%** of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. Calls to other priority groups of older clients have started, with around **8,090** calls made to date.
- Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with **3,280** calls made for older Maori, and **1,085** calls made to older Pacific peoples.

#### **Essential social service providers**

- We continue to work with our providers to find out their availability at Alert Level 2 – whether they can provide services and what kind of funding they might need.
- We are continuing to maintain the essential services register through alert level 3 to ensure that we are prepared if we need to revert back to alert level 4 and to ensure.
- Through the funding allocated to disability services we have approved **\$3m** which is supporting almost **68,000** people.

#### **Housing**

- There has been an increase of approximately 800 clients into Emergency Housing since lockdown.
- Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.
- MSD has asked MBIEs Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.
- Repatriation flights have started arriving into Christchurch, the MSD Regional Team has stood up a similar response to Auckland to support those who need MSD services.
- MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.

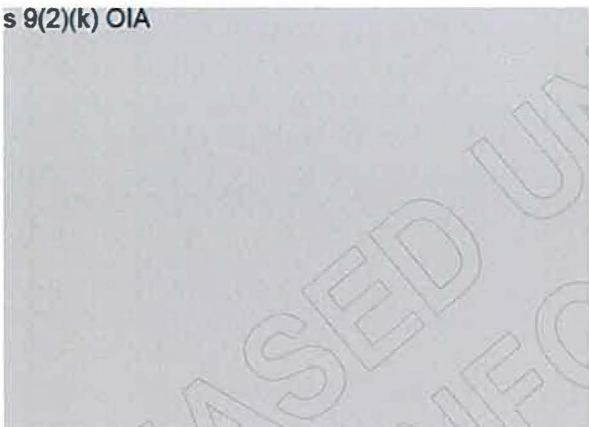
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E s 9(2)(a) OIA M
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	Comms team	
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>	

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA



## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #50

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	50
		Date	4 May 2020
CC	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Time	1700
	MSD Distribution		
Level	Level 3 – Restrict	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency



## In-Confidence

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## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>The online recruitment tool is off to a great start. As of 12am 4 May there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,094 job seekers</li> <li>• 181 employers</li> <li>• 2,438 job vacancies</li> <li>• 31 jobs successfully filled in under a week.</li> </ul> <p>Our focus this week is undertaking a stocktake of how well these initiatives have been tracking, and working with our frontline staff to ensure good and continued use of these tools.</p> <p>As benefit numbers continue to increase, we are seeing higher rates of people entering the benefit system who have never been on a benefit before. This includes some higher skilled groups requiring a different service levels than MSD's more traditional client groups.</p>
<p><b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b></p>	<p>This week, we are expanding our health and safety guidelines under Alert Level 2 for staff working from home, as well as guidance for our leaders to help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2.</p> <p>Work on the readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing. This week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team will confirm which sites will reopen</li> <li>• We will finalise:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our site opening plan</li> <li>○ site capacity</li> <li>○ our staff plan</li> <li>○ security arrangements</li> <li>○ and health &amp; safety guides (including hygiene, physical distancing and contact tracing).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b></p>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p> <p>Teams of MSD staff have been redeployed to process the large volume of subsidy applications received. MSD has hired <b>299</b> new staff for client facing roles and <b>388</b> in total, since 18 March.</p> <p><b>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward.</b> Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. <b>We have drafted a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand.</b> This paper is with senior leadership for approval.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p>Work to streamline the application process continues. As of <b>Sunday 3 May</b>, clients are now be able to upload their own, or their partner's, documents into MyMSD when they apply for a main benefit or pension.</p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our call centres were closed yesterday, <b>Sunday 6 May</b>.</li> <li>• High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were <b>60,473</b> logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>• To date, MSD has had <b>68 sites</b> impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>• From 19th March up to 4 May, a total of <b>135</b> staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, <b>127</b> have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining <b>6</b> are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date 123 grants totalling <b>\$5.25m</b> have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of <b>\$1.64m</b> for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</li> <li>• We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are continuing to connect with our ethnic communities over the radio. We have set up one interview per day this week, with various communities.</li> <li>• Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 39 groups totalling <b>\$990k</b>. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small focal groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>• Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Acute welfare needs in Queenstown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local CDEM group is now conducting needs assessments for all foreign nationals in Queenstown.</li> <li>• MFAT is working closely with foreign missions to ensure support is provided for this group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across our social media channels, we have been promoting our It's Still OK to Ask for Help campaign and information on how to apply for a food grant on MyMSD.</li> <li>• We continue to reach out to our regions via radio. Our regional commissioner in Taranaki and King Country has been interviewed on various local radio stations, promoting our services and programmes available for businesses and individuals.</li> <li>• Work is continuing on an Alert Level 2 communications approach for staff, clients, and providers.</li> </ul>

## In-Confidence

### All of Government Contribution and Support

#### Community – Vulnerable Communities

#### Wider welfare status and response

Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the *Where to go for Services and Support* guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.

#### **Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients**

- Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.
- As at end of day Sunday 3 May, around **111,240** calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately **3,120** (2.8%) have been referred for support services.
- We have now completed **91%** of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. Calls to other priority groups of older clients have started, with around **8,090** calls made to date.
- Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with **3,280** calls made for older Maori, and **1,085** calls made to older Pacific peoples.

#### **Essential social service providers**

- We continue to work with our providers to find out their availability at Alert Level 2 – whether they can provide services and what kind of funding they might need.
- We are continuing to maintain the essential services register through alert level 3 to ensure that we are prepared if we need to revert back to alert level 4 and to ensure.
- Through the funding allocated to disability services we have approved **\$3m** which is supporting almost **68,000** people.

#### **Housing**

- There has been an increase of approximately 800 clients into Emergency Housing since lockdown.
- Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.
- MSD has asked MBIEs Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.
- Repatriation flights have started arriving into Christchurch, the MSD Regional Team has stood up a similar response to Auckland to support those who need MSD services.
- MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.



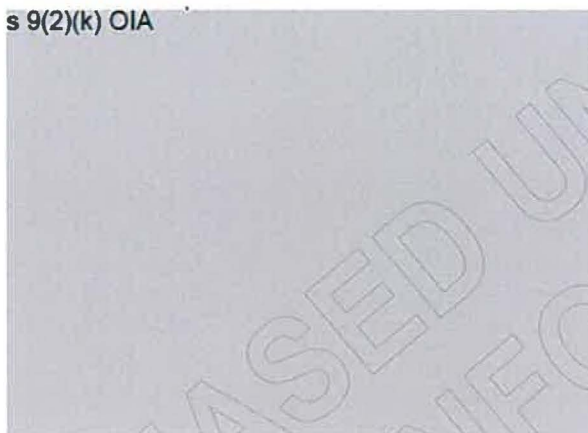
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E s 9(2)(a) OIA M [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA [REDACTED]
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SltRep due		<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA



## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #52

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	52
		Date	5 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1600
Level	Level 3 – Restrict	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency

## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 4 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 552,370 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 437,509 have been approved, supporting 1,725,208 people</li> <li>• \$10.635b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 6,387 applications pending</li> </ul> <p>On 4 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29,080 calls were answered across Work and Income, Seniors, Studylink, Housing and Wage subsidy contact centres</li> <li>• 108,921 logins to MyMSD online service</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 4 May, MSD has received a total of <b>552,370</b> applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (<b>2,320</b> new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Subsidy <b>288,825</b></li> <li>• Modified wage subsidy <b>232,521</b></li> <li>• Leave payment <b>26,141</b></li> <li>• Essential Worker <b>4,425</b></li> <li>• Leave Support <b>458</b></li> </ul> <p>Of these, <b>437,509</b> have been approved, <b>36,191</b> have been declined, and <b>72,283</b> have been closed. A total of <b>\$10.635 billion</b> has been paid to date benefiting a total of <b>1,725,208</b> (<b>1,504,941</b> employees and <b>220,267</b> Sole Traders).</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>A second round of the Employer Engagement Campaign begins this week, covering a further three regions.</p> <p>The online recruitment tool is off to a great start. As of 12am 4 May there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,094 job seekers</li> <li>• 181 employers</li> <li>• 2,438 job vacancies</li> <li>• 31 jobs successfully filled in under a week.</li> </ul> <p>Our focus this week is undertaking a stocktake of how well these initiatives have been tracking, and working with our frontline staff to ensure good and continued use of these tools. This will help us build an Employment Operating Model for Alert Level 2 that captures everything that is happening in the employment space and all the help we can offer to our clients.</p>
<p><b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b></p>	<p>This week, we are expanding our health and safety guidelines under Alert Level 2 for staff working from home, as well as guidance for our leaders to help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2.</p> <p>Work on readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing. This week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team will confirm which sites will reopen</li> <li>• A health and safety pack is going out to all sites tomorrow – to provide guidance on hygiene, physical distancing, and contact tracing.</li> <li>• We are drafting a site readiness assessment, to cover both physical readiness and ability to comprehensively provide case management and employment services in the COVID-19 environment.</li> <li>• We will finalise:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our site opening plan</li> <li>○ site capacity</li> <li>○ our staff plan</li> <li>○ security arrangements</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We will continue to promote our online and phone services as the first point of contact for clients, so we can keep numbers coming into our sites low in Alert Level 2. This will help us adhere to physical distancing rules and keep our clients and staff safe.</p>
<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b></p>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p> <p>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward. Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p>be necessary. We have drafted a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand. This paper is with senior leadership for approval.</p> <p>Work to streamline the application process continues. The IT build for the streamlining process is on track. We are waiting for decisions on changes to operational policy before we can proceed further with this process.</p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have been working hard to get wait times down across our phone lines, so our clients can quickly access help. Call volumes remain high – however, average wait times across all lines yesterday was approximately 7 minutes, down from more than two hours at their peak.</li> <li>There were increased wait times at the beginning of this week, after the weekend. Historically, wait times below 10 minutes on a Monday are considered a good achievement.</li> <li>High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were 108,921 logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>To date, MSD has had 68 sites impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>From 19th March up to 5 May, a total of 140 staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, 129 have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining 9 are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To date 123 grants totalling \$5.25m have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</li> <li>We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are continuing to connect with our ethnic communities over the radio. We have set up one interview per day this week, with various communities.</li> <li>Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 39 groups totalling \$990k. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Acute welfare needs in Queenstown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local CDEM group is now conducting needs assessments for all foreign nationals in Queenstown.</li> <li>MFAT is working closely with foreign missions to ensure support is provided for this group.</li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have been promoting the new MyMSD electronic document upload capability.</li> <li>• We continue to reach out to our regions via radio. Our regional commissioner in Taranaki and King Country has been interviewed on various local radio stations, promoting our services and programmes available for businesses and individuals.</li> <li>• Work is continuing on an Alert Level 2 communications approach for staff, clients, and providers.</li> </ul>
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### All of Government Contribution and Support

<p><b>Community – Vulnerable Communities</b></p> <p><b>Wider welfare status and response</b></p>	<p>Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the <i>Where to go for Services and Support</i> guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.</p> <p><b>In-home care for essential workers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As at 30 April \$2.6m has been committed to the delivery of childcare services. This has reduced from last week (\$3.33m), as a number of providers have sought to reduce their contracted hours due to lower parent demand or workforce constraints. This also factors in the additional funding required for the extended period of two weeks.</li> <li>• A paper went to the COVID-19 Ministerial Group to seek a decision on whether to extend the contracts beyond 8 May 2020. The decision was made to not extend contracts out further than 8 May 2020, so in-home childcare for essential workers will not be funded after this date. Essential workers who need childcare will be expected to have made their own arrangements by this time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>• As at end of day Monday 4 May, around <b>114,900</b> calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately <b>3,180</b> (2.8%) have been referred for support services.</li> <li>• We have now completed <b>95%</b> of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. Calls to other priority groups of older clients have started, with around <b>8,350</b> calls made to date.</li> <li>• Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with <b>3,370</b> calls made for older Maori, and <b>1,085</b> calls made to older Pacific peoples.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential social service providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to work with our providers to find out their availability at Alert Level 2 – whether they can provide services and what kind of funding they might need.</li> <li>• We are continuing to maintain the essential services register through alert level 3 to ensure that we are prepared if we need to revert back to alert level 4 and to ensure.</li> <li>• Through the funding allocated to disability services we have approved \$3m which is supporting almost 68,000 people.</li> </ul>
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## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As the economic situation worsens, there is an increased risk of people being unable to sustain their tenancies. Our aim is to support people to stay in tenancies, and try to prevent high numbers coming through the emergency housing system. Guidance and key messages are going out to our contact centres this week to better enable our staff to support clients in the housing space.</li><li>• We are working on an integrated housing system that reaches across all business groups and provides people with the support they need to retain their tenancies.</li><li>• Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.</li><li>• MSD has asked MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.</li><li>• MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.</li></ul>
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## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	Es 9(2)(a) OIA M [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA [REDACTED]
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>	

External Distribution:  
s 9(2)(k) OIA



**In-Confidence**

**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #53**

<b>To</b>	s 9(2)(k) OIA	<b>Sitrep #</b>	<b>53</b>
		<b>Date</b>	<b>6 May 2020</b>
<b>CC</b>	<b>MSD Distribution</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>1700</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>Level 3 – Restrict</b>	<b>Declaration</b>	1221 25 March <b>National Emergency</b>



## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 5 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 554,445 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 439,037 have been approved, supporting 1,727,925 people</li> <li>• \$10.65b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 6,124 applications pending</li> </ul> <p>On 5 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24,325 calls were answered across Work and Income, Seniors, Studylink, Housing and Wage subsidy contact centres</li> <li>• Average wait times were 53 seconds – down from more than two hours at their peak</li> <li>• 96,906 logins to MyMSD online service</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 5 May, MSD has received a total of 554,445 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (2,075 new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Subsidy 288,827</li> <li>• Modified wage subsidy 234,408</li> <li>• Leave payment 26,141</li> <li>• Essential Worker 4,431</li> <li>• Leave Support 638</li> </ul> <p>Of these, 439,037 have been approved, 36,589 have been declined, and 72,695 have been closed. A total of \$10.65 billion has been paid to date benefiting a total of 1,727,925 (1,506,704 employees and 221,221 Sole Traders).</p>

## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>Our Rapid Return to Work phone service contacted and offered the service to 474 clients in the first four days. Of these clients, 174 (37%) have opted-in for the service and have booked in a follow up appointment.</p> <p>A second round of the Employer Engagement Campaign begins this week, covering a further three regions.</p> <p>Our focus this week is undertaking a stocktake of how well these initiatives have been tracking, and working with our frontline staff to ensure good and continued use of these tools. This will help us build an Employment Operating Model for Alert Level 2 that captures everything that is happening in the employment space and all the help we can offer to our clients.</p>
<b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b>	<p>There is a perception amongst some of our staff that everyone is expected to return to the office in Alert Level 2. This is not the case. We are managing these expectations and developing guidelines for our leaders to help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2. The guidelines will be released on Friday.</p> <p>Work on readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing. This week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team will confirm which sites will reopen</li> <li>• A health and safety pack goes out to all sites today – to provide guidance on hygiene, physical distancing, and contract tracing.</li> <li>• A survey will go out to our sites to ascertain readiness for Alert Level 2.</li> <li>• We are drafting a site readiness assessment, to cover both physical readiness and ability to comprehensively provide case management and employment services in the COVID-19 environment.</li> <li>• We will finalise:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our site opening plan</li> <li>○ site capacity</li> <li>○ our staff plan</li> <li>○ security arrangements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p> <p>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward. Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. We have drafted a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p>Work to streamline the application process continues. The IT build for the streamlining process is on track. We are waiting for decisions on changes to operational policy before we can proceed further with this process.</p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have been working hard to get wait times down across our phone lines, so our clients can quickly access help. Call volumes remain high – however, average wait times across all lines yesterday was approximately <b>53 seconds</b>, down from more than two hours at their peak.</li> <li>High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were <b>108,921</b> logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>To date, MSD has had <b>69 sites</b> impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>From 19th March up to 6 May, a total of <b>141</b> staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, <b>132</b> have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining <b>7</b> are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To date 123 grants totalling \$5.25m have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</li> <li>We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are continuing to connect with our ethnic communities over the radio. We have set up one interview per day this week, with various communities.</li> <li>Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 39 groups totalling \$990k. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Acute welfare needs in Queenstown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local CDEM group is now conducting needs assessments for all foreign nationals in Queenstown.</li> <li>MFAT is working closely with foreign missions to ensure support is provided for this group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our communications package for Alert Level 2 has two phases:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: The Prime Minister announces Alert Level 2 guidelines (tomorrow, 6 May)</li> <li>2: We find out when we transition to Alert Level 2 (Monday, 11 May).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

- We are readying communications to our staff and clients for both these phases.
- We are reaching out to all our stakeholders to ensure communications will be relevant and accessible to everyone.

### All of Government Contribution and Support

<p><b>Community – Vulnerable Communities</b></p> <p><b>Wider welfare status and response</b></p>	<p>Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the <i>Where to go for Services and Support</i> guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.</p> <p><b><i>In-home care for essential workers</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As at 30 April \$2.6m has been committed to the delivery of childcare services. This has reduced from last week (\$3.33m), as a number of providers have sought to reduce their contracted hours due to lower parent demand or workforce constraints. This also factors in the additional funding required for the extended period of two weeks.</li> <li>• Contracts will not be extended beyond 8 May 2020, so in-home childcare for essential workers will not be funded after this date. Essential workers who need childcare will be expected to have made their own arrangements by this time.</li> <li>• On 4 May, we advised providers that their contracts will not be extended beyond 8 May. We are beginning the process of winding services down and finalising payments.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>• As at end of day Tuesday 5 May, around <b>122,060</b> calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately <b>3,270 (2.7%)</b> have been referred for support services.</li> <li>• We have now completed <b>95%</b> of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. <b>As we complete the calls to the highest priority group, calls to other priority groups of older clients are accelerating</b>, with around <b>14,980</b> calls made to date.</li> <li>• Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with <b>3,440</b> calls made for older Maori, and <b>1,140</b> calls made to older Pacific peoples.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Essential social service providers</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 917 essential service providers on the register.</li> <li>• We have also added 46 Emergency Housing Providers to the register.</li> <li>• We continue to work with our providers to find out their availability at Alert Level 2 – whether they can provide services and what kind of funding they might need.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Housing</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the economic situation worsens, there is an increased risk of people being unable to sustain their tenancies. Our aim is to support people to stay in tenancies, and try to prevent high numbers coming through the emergency housing system. Guidance and key messages are going out to our contact centres this week to better enable our staff to support clients in the housing space.</li> </ul>
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## In-Confidence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are working on an integrated housing system that reaches across all business groups and provides people with the support they need to retain their tenancies.</li><li>• Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.</li><li>• MSD has asked MBIEs Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.</li><li>• MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.</li></ul>
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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

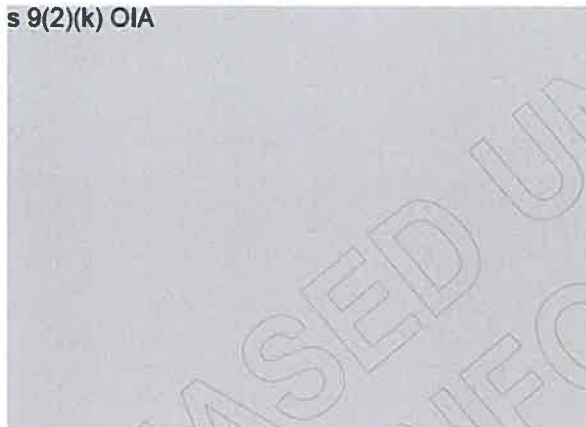
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	Comms team	
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>	

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA





## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #54

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	54
		Date	7 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1600
		Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency
Level	Level 3 – Restrict		

## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 6 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 556,335 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 440,751 have been approved, supporting 1,735,542 people</li> <li>• \$10.698b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 5,515 applications pending</li> </ul> <p>On 6 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23,156 calls were answered across Work and Income, Seniors, Studylink, Housing and Wage subsidy contact centres</li> <li>• Average wait times were 1 minute – down from more than two hours at their peak</li> <li>• 97,616 logins to MyMSD online service</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 6 May, MSD has received a total of <b>556,335</b> applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (<b>1,858</b> new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage Subsidy <b>524,898</b></li> <li>• Leave payment <b>26,141</b></li> <li>• Essential Worker <b>4,463</b></li> <li>• Leave Support <b>833</b></li> </ul> <p>Of these, 440,751 have been approved, 37,046 have been declined, and 73,023 have been closed. A total of <b>\$10.698 billion</b> has been paid to date benefiting a total of <b>1,735,542</b> (<b>1,513,406 employees</b> and <b>222,136 Sole Traders</b>).</p> <p>Applications for the wage subsidy can be made through to 9 June. The next steps for the scheme are currently being considered.</p> <p>The wage subsidy auditing process is ongoing. Our auditing to date has found that in the vast majority of cases, employers are doing the right thing. We have found that in many cases where entitlements have been wrongly claimed, it is due to uncertainty about eligibility criteria, rather than deliberate attempts at deception.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>Our Rapid Return to Work phone service contacted and offered the service to 474 clients in the first four days. Of these clients, 174 (37%) have opted-in for the service and have booked in a follow up appointment. <b>RRtW has revealed insights about the situations our clients are in – for example, many of them have not written a CV for years, or have many transferrable skills but do not know how to market them. We are using this information to put together a training package for Job Connect staff, so they can provide more tailored support.</b></p> <p><b>We are sending out emails to 3000 employers today, as part of the Employer Engagement Campaign. We will be monitoring responses and using them to inform the Campaign going forward.</b></p> <p>Our focus this week is undertaking a stocktake of how our employment service initiatives have been tracking. This will help us build an Employment Operating Model for Alert Level 2 that captures everything happening in the employment space. <b>We are developing an A3 to present the model, for internal use. This will go live tomorrow.</b></p>
<b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b>	<p><b>After the Prime Minister has made the announcement about Alert Level 2 this afternoon, we will review our AL2 guidelines for our service centres and National Office to ensure they are in line with Government messaging.</b></p> <p>There is a perception amongst some of our staff that everyone is expected to return to the office in Alert Level 2. This is not the case. We are managing these expectations and developing guidelines for our leaders to help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2. <b>The guidelines will be released tomorrow.</b></p> <p>Work on readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing. This week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team will confirm which sites will reopen</li> <li>• A health and safety pack and an operations pack were finalised yesterday, ready to send out to all our sites on Monday.</li> <li>• A survey will go out to our sites to ascertain readiness for Alert Level 2.</li> <li>• We are drafting a site readiness assessment, to cover both physical readiness and ability to comprehensively provide case management and employment services in the COVID-19 environment.</li> <li>• We will finalise:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our site opening plan</li> <li>○ site capacity</li> <li>○ our staff plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand</b>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments. Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward.</b> Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. We have drafted a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand.</p> <p>Work to streamline the application process continues. The IT build for the streamlining process is on track. We are waiting for decisions on changes to operational policy before we can proceed further with this process.</p> <p><b>We are also working on simplifying MyMSD to allow easier use for our clients. The first stage is complete and went live 3 May – enabling clients to upload their own documents. The next phase is increasing the stability and capacity of MyMSD.</b></p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have been working hard to get wait times down across our phone lines, so our clients can quickly access help. Call volumes remain high – however, average wait times across all lines yesterday was approximately <b>1 minute</b>, down from more than two hours at their peak.</li> <li>• <b>Our call volumes yesterday were much higher than is usual for a Wednesday, so our contact centre teams did well to achieve 1 minute wait times.</b></li> <li>• High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were <b>97,616</b> logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>• To date, MSD has had <b>69 sites</b> impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>• From 19th March up to 7 May, a total of <b>143</b> staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, <b>134</b> have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining <b>7</b> are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD – Welfare update</b></p>	<p><b>New Zealanders stranded overseas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current clients have had their payments auto-extended and we continue to contact clients whose payments had been suspended, for resumption processing.</b></li> <li>• <b>All overseas clients are now receiving the Winter Energy Payment.</b></li> <li>• <b>We are considering whether to end or extend these payments once the programme ends in mid-June.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To date 123 grants totalling \$5.25m have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services, including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refugees affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</b></li> <li>• <b>We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</b></li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are continuing to connect with our ethnic communities over the radio. We have set up one interview per day this week, with various communities.</li> <li>Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for <b>40</b> groups totalling <b>\$1m</b>. The groups have ranged from Iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We've been doing a lot of planning for how MSD will operate and once the Prime Minister has made her announcement, we'll be able to finalise these plans and have more detail out to staff and clients at the beginning of next week.</li> <li>We are reaching out to all our stakeholders to ensure communications will be relevant and accessible to everyone.</li> </ul>
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### All of Government Contribution and Support

<p><b>Community – Vulnerable Communities</b></p> <p>Wider welfare status and response</p>	<p>Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the <i>Where to go for Services and Support</i> guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.</p> <p><b>In-home care for essential workers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As at 30 April \$2.6m has been committed to the delivery of childcare services. This has reduced from last week (\$3.33m), as a number of providers have sought to reduce their contracted hours due to lower parent demand or workforce constraints. This also factors in the additional funding required for the extended period of two weeks.</li> <li>Contracts will not be extended beyond 8 May 2020, so in-home childcare for essential workers will not be funded after this date. Essential workers who need childcare will be expected to have made their own arrangements by this time.</li> <li>On 4 May, we advised providers that their contracts will not be extended beyond 8 May. We are beginning the process of winding services down and finalising payments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>As at end of day Wednesday 6 May, around <b>126,650</b> calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. <b>This includes around 2,300 calls made to people we were unable to reach in the first round of calls.</b> Of these calls, approximately <b>3,310 (2.6%)</b> have been referred for support services.</li> <li>We have now completed <b>96%</b> of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. <b>As we complete the calls to the highest priority group, calls to other priority groups of older clients are accelerating,</b> with around <b>19,230</b> calls made to date.</li> <li>Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with <b>3,490</b> calls made for older Maori, and <b>1,190</b> calls made to older Pacific peoples.</li> </ul>
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## In-Confidence

### ***Essential social service providers***

- There are 917 essential service providers on the register.
- We have also added 46 Emergency Housing Providers to the register.
- We are developing communications for our providers on Alert Level 2. These will be finalised following the Prime Minister's announcement this afternoon.
- Our communications strategy to providers involves regular and consistent messaging with the same look and feel, to ensure provider are well informed.

### ***Housing***

- As the economic situation worsens, there is an increased risk of people being unable to sustain their tenancies. Our aim is to support people to stay in tenancies, and try to prevent high numbers coming through the emergency housing system. Guidance and key messages are going out to our contact centres this week to better enable our staff to support clients in the housing space.
- We are working on an integrated housing system that reaches across all business groups and provides people with the support they need to retain their tenancies.
- Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.
- MSD has asked MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.
- MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.




## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M: [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA [REDACTED]
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
	Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA



## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #55

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	55
		Date	8 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1630
		Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency



## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>MSD's focus is on ensuring the following essential services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• redeployment of workers into essential services, and</li> <li>• ensuring service providers continue to operate, both essential and some additional services available in prevention and navigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Assessments &amp; Updates</b>	<p><b>MSD Critical Workforce Demand Summary</b></p> <p>MSD continues to process large volumes of applications, calls, appointments and online traffic.</p> <p>We are making good progress in processing wage subsidies.</p> <p>As at 7 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 558,109 applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (since 16 March)</li> <li>• Of these, 442,736 have been approved, supporting 1,744,342 people</li> <li>• \$10.752b subsidy applications paid</li> <li>• There are 4,001 applications pending</li> </ul> <p>On 7 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21,701 calls were answered across Work and Income, Seniors, Studylink, Housing and Wage subsidy contact centres</li> <li>• Average wait times were less than 30 seconds – down from more than two hours at their peak</li> <li>• 83,949 logins to MyMSD online service</li> </ul>
<b>Income support and wage subsidy</b>	<p>As at 11pm on 7 May, MSD has received a total of <b>558,109</b> applications for Wage and Leave Subsidies (<b>1,774</b> new since yesterday):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage subsidy <b>288,833</b></li> <li>• Modified wage subsidy <b>237,660</b></li> <li>• Leave payment <b>26,141</b></li> <li>• Essential worker <b>4,464</b></li> <li>• Leave support <b>1,011</b></li> </ul> <p>Of these, 442,736 have been approved, 37,999 have been declined, and 73,373 have been closed. A total of <b>\$10.752 billion</b> has been paid to date benefiting a total of <b>1,744,342</b> (<b>1,521,148 employees</b> and <b>223,194 Sole Traders</b>).</p> <p>The latest Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update was published on MSD's website today, Friday 8 May, as well as the Monthly Benefits Update for April.</p> <p>Applications for the wage subsidy can be made through to 9 June. The next steps for the scheme are currently being considered.</p>

## In-Confidence

	<p>The wage subsidy auditing process is ongoing. As at 6 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSD has completed 3,584 random and targeted audits.</li> <li>• 3,355 applicants had voluntarily advised they want to refund all or part of the subsidy. This has led to \$56.8m of refunds requested and \$25.2m has already been refunded.</li> <li>• Our auditing had resulted in 168 applicants being asked to refund either all or part of their subsidy. A total of \$2.46m has been requested from these applicants with \$1.4m already refunded.</li> </ul> <p><b>Employment</b></p> <p><b>In April, we helped 3,065 people into jobs. In May so far, we have helped 954 people.</b></p> <p>MSD is delivering a suite of employment service initiatives to ensure we can effectively engage with more people and Keep New Zealanders Working. These initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and a new online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p>We sent out emails to 3000 employers yesterday, as part of the Employer Engagement Campaign. We are monitoring responses as they come in and using them to determine future stages of the campaign.</p>
<p><b>Move to Alert Level 3 and readiness for Alert Level 2</b></p>	<p>We have been busy readying National Office for Alert Level 2. Posters are up in common areas such as kitchens, as well as bathrooms and the lifts, to inform staff of how to correctly social distance. Markers have been placed on the floor in lift lobbies and break out areas to show staff where they can stand and sit without breaching the 1m rule. Hand sanitiser is available by the lifts on all floors.</p> <p>Remote working policies are being finalised today after state services guidance and the PM's announcement. This will help us continue to support our staff working from home. We are also looking into providing staff working from home with more physical tools, such as desktop monitors.</p> <p>Guidelines are going out to our leaders today so they can support staff with the decision of whether to come back into the office at alert Level 2.</p> <p>Work on readying our sites to open under Alert Level 2 is ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our leadership team has confirmed which sites will reopen.</li> <li>• The health, safety and security guidelines for sites have been amended after the Prime Minister's announcement and will be available for staff next week.</li> <li>• On Monday, a survey will go out to our sites to ascertain readiness for Alert Level 2.</li> <li>• Elements of MSD's plan for re-opening frontline sites safely, such as the appointment process, will be tested Monday in readiness for the move to L2.</li> <li>• We are making sure our communications are consistent with those across MSD and Government messaging.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MSD</b></p>	<p>All Work and Income service centres are closed for face to face appointments.</p>



## In-Confidence

<b>Critical Workforce Demand</b>	<p>Services are being provided online or via the phone.</p> <p>We expect new benefit applications to continue to increase going forward. Planning around future demand continues, including how we will reprioritise and train our staff to meet this demand, and what recruitment may be necessary. <b>We have finalised a recruitment strategy to respond to increased demand. The recruitment process has started.</b></p> <p>Work to streamline the application process continues. The IT build for the streamlining process is on track. We are waiting for decisions on changes to operational policy before we can proceed further with this process.</p> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have been working hard to get wait times down across our phone lines, so our clients can quickly access help. Call volumes remain high – however, average wait times across all lines yesterday was <b>less than 30 seconds</b>, down from more than two hours at their peak.</li> <li>• <b>Despite continued high volumes of calls, we are managing to answer more quickly than ever. This is a combination of improvements to service that have been fast tracked over the last few months, as well as moving to an integrated work force between our Call Centres, Centralised Processing sites, and our Frontline case managers.</b></li> <li>• High levels of online service continue. On 3 May, there were <b>83,949</b> logins to MyMSD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exposure to COVID-19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MSD service centres are closed to the public. Staff continue to work in those sites to call clients and process applications.</li> <li>• To date, MSD has had <b>70 sites</b> impacted by a staff member with actual or suspected COVID-19 symptoms or close contact with someone who has actual or suspected COVID-19. All sites are now reopened for staff to continue to work.</li> <li>• From 19th March up to 8 May, a total of <b>146</b> staff members have been tested for COVID-19. Of these, <b>137</b> have returned a negative result, two have tested positive for COVID-19 and the remaining <b>7</b> are waiting for their result.</li> </ul>
<b>MSD – Welfare update</b>	<p><b>New Zealanders stranded overseas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current clients have had their payments auto-extended and we continue to contact clients whose payments had been suspended, for resumption processing.</li> <li>• All overseas clients are now receiving the Winter Energy Payment.</li> <li>• We are considering whether to end or extend these payments once the programme ends in mid-June.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Family violence remains of high concern within iwi/Māori communities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased family violence amongst the gang community does not appear to have reached the level initially anticipated. However, the risk should continue to be monitored and addressed as recommended. Whānau will come under pressure from job and income loss that is and will occur as we move through the alert levels.</b></li> <li>• <b>MSD continues to work with gang leaders, and related groups, to get messaging out across the broader networks and align messaging within the E Tū Whānau family violence prevention initiative towards the COVID-19 response.</b></li> <li>• To date <b>123 grants totalling \$5.25m</b> have been approved to providers delivering family and sexual violence crisis response services,</li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p>including a grant of \$1.64m for the 41 refuges affiliated to National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We estimate this funding will support 4,800 people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Māori and Pacific whānau and communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern about the future, particularly employment and income - is becoming more prevalent as communities move toward Alert Level 2 and recovery.</li> <li>Some whānau are experiencing greater social disconnection because they do not have the connection or devices for digital communications.</li> <li>These risks are mitigated by active iwi/Māori mobilisation and support for whānau. Mitigations include connecting, assessing need, acting as a provider agent for MSD to provide income maintenance, and delivering food and hygiene packages.</li> <li>MSD is calling whānau by age group to assess need and offer support.</li> <li>Through E Tū Whānau we have processed payments for 40 groups totalling \$1m. The groups have ranged from iwi organisations to small local groups who have reached out to isolated community members.</li> <li>Many of our Pacific providers have received funding from community grants as an initial fund and we are working with them on a more sustainable approach. These grants cover a broader range of regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Alert Level 2 communications plan has been finalised and is ready for approval. It will be used to inform staff, clients, and stakeholders.</li> <li>We will continue to promote our phone and online channels as the best way to connect with us, without discouraging clients from coming into sites if they need to.</li> </ul>
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### All of Government Contribution and Support

<p><b>Community – Vulnerable Communities</b></p> <p>Wider welfare status and response</p>	<p>Government agencies are encouraged to refer to the <i>Where to go for Services and Support</i> guidance on the MSD website, as noted in NCMC 06 April Tactical Insights Report, paragraph 25.</p> <p><b>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Caring for Communities workstream, MSD will continue working with a range of partners to continue outreach to the over 70 group. Community groups are well progressed with calls to disabled people, and people with chronic health conditions.</li> <li>As at end of day Thursday 7 May, around <b>127,730</b> calls have been made across all priority levels, with the majority of people coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of these calls, approximately <b>3,320</b> (2.6%) have been referred for support services.</li> <li>We have now completed <b>96%</b> of calls to the highest priority group of older clients.</li> <li>Calls to Maori and Pacific peoples are progressing, with <b>3,590</b> calls made for older Maori, and <b>1,190</b> calls made to older Pacific peoples.</li> <li>Focus has now shifted to calls to other priority groups of older clients, and reporting will now shift to those groups accordingly. To date, around <b>20,160</b> calls have been made to older people in the other priority groups, with around <b>370</b> (1.8%) referred for support services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential social service providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are 917 essential service providers on the register.</li> </ul>
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## In-Confidence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have also added 46 Emergency Housing Providers to the register.</li><li>• Communications to our providers have been finalised and agreed on by other agencies we work with. They go out today. Feedback will be managed and used to inform further communications.</li><li>• We are planning outbound calling to providers – with the help of other agencies – in the first two weeks of Alert Level 2, to check that the provision of services under AL2 is tracking well and to help resolve any issues.</li></ul> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As the economic situation worsens, there is an increased risk of people being unable to sustain their tenancies. Our aim is to support people to stay in tenancies, and try to prevent high numbers coming through the emergency housing system. Guidance and key messages are going out to our contact centres this week to better enable our staff to support clients in the housing space.</li><li>• We are working on streamlined housing services to respond to demand and ensure our clients can quickly and easily access the help they need.</li><li>• Placements into Public and Transitional Housing have recommenced. There will be a 5-8 week delay before we see any significant volumes of supply come on due to COVID restrictions.</li><li>• MSD has asked MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service to direct clients requiring income assistance for housing to resume using our BAU phone and digital channels.</li><li>• MSD continues to work closely with the Housing Provider Sector including Community Housing Aotearoa and Te Matapihi.</li></ul>
	<p>MSD situation reports are currently produced daily Monday-Friday. As of next week, reporting will move to once a week on a Thursday. The next MSD sitrep will be Thursday 14 May.</p>



## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M: [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
	Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA

[REDACTED]

## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #56

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	56
		Date	14 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1700
Level	Level 2 – Reduce	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency



## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>At Alert Level 2, MSD's focus is on ensuring the following services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• reopening service centres safely, encouraging phone/online channels for those who can</li> <li>• focus on a relatively narrow work programme to deliver necessary settings and capability; and</li> <li>• broadening of services provided by our partners – more fully operational support for communities, still with a focus on vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Alert Level 2</b>	<p>Most of our sites reopen today, under Alert Level 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are offering booked face to face appointments, although we are still encouraging people to use our phone / online channels.</li> <li>• Access in the service centres will be restricted, with only a certain amount of people allowed on site at any one time.</li> <li>• Safety of our staff and clients is our top priority, as always – we have a register of people visiting us for contact tracing purposes; and appropriate physical distancing and cleaning measures in place.</li> <li>• Clear Health and Safety guidance for operating at AL2 went out to sites on Monday.</li> <li>• We have been making daily calls to site managers to give them the opportunity to voice concerns, ask questions, and give feedback on the move to AL2.</li> <li>• Early this week we surveyed our sites to make sure they were ready to open. Responses have shown that most staff were ready for the move, although some reported anxiety. This is being managed at a site level and we have ongoing engagement with the PSA.</li> </ul> <p>We have also been busy ensuring our National Office is safe for staff to return at Alert Level 2. On Monday, guidance was sent out to our leaders to help them help staff decide whether to come into the office at Alert Level 2.</p> <p>A 'Welcome Back Pack' was sent out to National Office staff on Tuesday, to explain how we are adhering to Health, Safety and Security guidelines and that National Office is a safe place to work.</p> <p><b>Communications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alert Level 2 communications were finalised after the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday. These have been going out to staff at National Office and sites, to clients, and to stakeholders.</li> <li>• We have updated the Work and Income website with AL2 information for our clients. The website continues to be encouraged as a first point of contact, before clients call us or book an appointment.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19 Response and Recovery</b>	<p><b>Future Operating Model</b></p> <p>MSD has been working on a Future Operating Model that integrates our deliverables with how we are contributing to our COVID response, meeting</p>



## In-Confidence

the increased demand for our services, and shows alignment to our strategic direction.

We have developed a high-level description of a future state and are creating more tangible descriptions of future offerings, to provide direction and support alignment for the workstream leads. The model will also provide our people with a clear sense of how the changes they are seeing are building towards a future welfare system.

Work is starting to describe the interim and end states for income support and housing, employment and communities. Work is also beginning on performance indicators and benefits that can be associated with the realisation of these end states, to assist us in tracking progress.

### ***Meeting increased demand for our services***

We expect increased demand for MSD services as we respond to COVID-19 and move into recovery.

As our sites reopen this week, we will work to increase our understanding as to why people are visiting us and how we can improve our services to help them over the phone or through online channels.

We don't want to discourage anyone from coming into our sites, but we can increasingly provide a better and faster service through calls or online.

- **Call centres**
- Keeping call wait times down is important, so we can ensure clients quickly get the help they need over the phone. This will be a major focus for us in AL2.
- We are focused on adequately responding to emergency situations – such food grants and emergency benefits – over the phone, so our clients can get the help they need quickly and without needing to make an appointment.
- We have been putting more of our staff into inbound calling this week, to keep wait times down. Call volumes remain high, however, wait times on Monday were 6.5 minutes – one of our best Mondays this year – and yesterday were just 2.5 minutes.
- Despite continued high volumes of calls, we are generally managing to answer more quickly than ever. This is a combination of improvements to service that have been fast tracked over the last few months, as well as moving to an integrated work force between our Call Centres, Centralised Processing sites, and our Frontline case managers.
- **MyMSD**
- High levels of MyMSD logins continue.
- An update over the weekend increased the login capacity of MyMSD.
- On 15 May, we're introducing a new function which allows our staff activate an option in MyMSD for the client to upload their documents while on the phone with us. This helps us provide a better digital service.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recruitment</b></li> <li>• The Budget 2020 Employment and Financial Support Response provides funding to increase our workforce capacity by 807 full time equivalent from July 2020 (\$250.0 million). This is over and above the increase of 263 FTE funded as part of Budget 2019.</li> <li>• The recruitment process started this week.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<p><b>In May so far, we have helped 1,924 people into jobs.</b></p> <p>COVID-19 is causing a significant increase in the number of people seeking employment assistance. We expect to see: a mix of clients seeking employment services, including those who have never previously sought help from MSD; significant labour market disruption and skill shifts; significant regional variation; and different population groups more adversely affected than others.</p> <p>To help New Zealanders find employment, we are building an employment service that provides tailored support; provides more and better training; and develops stronger partnerships with employers.</p> <p>Budget 2020 provides investment in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Service Response - to expand and adjust MSD's employment support services and take a more proactive and innovative approach with employers and employees (\$150.0 million).</li> <li>• Initiatives to strengthen Employment Services for young people, disabled people, and older people.</li> </ul> <p>Our employment initiatives include: a Rapid Return to Work phone service supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work; 35 virtual employment centres, working with employers and job seekers over the phone and online; an Employer Engagement Campaign with employers receiving the COVID-19 wage subsidy to promote MSD services; and an online recruitment tool to connect employers with people looking for work.</p> <p><b>This week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have developed an Employment Operating Model that captures all our work in the employment space, which groups of people each initiative is targeted towards, and how our staff can best provide employment services to these groups under Alert Level 2.</li> <li>• We sent out emails to three more regions as part of our Employer Engagement Campaign. The email campaign is to keep in touch with businesses and offer advice and support if needed. We'll learn from this before emailing more employers.</li> <li>• From go live on 28 April to Friday 8 May (nine days), our Rapid Return to Work service had contacted 1545 clients and helped 73 of them into work.</li> <li>• Our online recruitment tool has been promoted to employers this week. There has been high usage and a jump in the number of vacancies listed.</li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

<b>Income and housing</b>	<p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>Of the 2604 Police Safety Orders issued since Alert Level 4 began to May 4th – MSD has provided accommodation support to 497 perpetrators and victims. MSD has agreed with Police that we will continue to provide support where all other avenues have been exhausted, until the end of May.</p> <p>The number of people in emergency housing continues to rise. At 12th May, 4168 households in EH; these households have 3540 children associated to them. We are starting to see new public housing supply slowly coming back into stock – however, this does not automatically impact on a reduction in emergency housing numbers. There have been no reports of new Transitional Housing supply since the move to Level 3.</p> <p><b>Wage subsidy</b></p> <p>The Government has announced Budget 2020 that there will be a Wage Subsidy Extension payment available to support employers, including sole traders, who are still significantly impacted by COVID-19 after the 12-week Wage Subsidy ends. It's also available to those who haven't received the Wage Subsidy previously. This is so they can keep paying their employees.</p>
<b>Communities and Welfare</b>	<p><b>Family and sexual violence</b></p> <p>On 11 May, the Government announced a significant Budget 2020 investment of \$202.9 million (over four years) for responding to pressing family violence and sexual violence (FVSV) needs in New Zealand communities.</p> <p>Our MSD team will work alongside our Joint Venture partners to implement increased funding of \$183 million for MSD-funded specialist family violence services. The package also includes funding for multi-agency specialist responses to non-fatal strangulation (involving Police, Health and Justice).</p> <p><b>Social service providers</b></p> <p>Budget 2020 includes funding to address cost pressures in MSD-funded social services, help for providers to meet demand and continue to support communities, and grants for community groups.</p> <p>There will also be support for Foodbanks, Food Rescue and Community Food Services. Foodbanks continue to report high demand.</p> <p>Providers have reported that they are ready for AL2. Some, who work with groups, were impacted by the maximum inside gathering rule of 10 people. We have worked through this with groups and helped them manage group numbers.</p> <p>New PPE guidance and an ordering process is in place for providers under AL2.</p> <p>We have on-going engagement with providers from across the sector – some are starting to signal that they are struggling financially. We are discussing this with the cross-agency group, to address concerns and develop joint responses.</p>



## In-Confidence

### ***Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients***

As at Friday 8 May, we had completed over 96% of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. The focus has now shifted to calls to other priority groups of older clients, and reporting has ceased for those in priority 1.

As at Wednesday 13 May, around 31,470 calls have been made to older people in the priority 2, 3 and 4 groups. As expected, the calls show that the vast majority of people are coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of the total calls made, approximately 460 (1.5%) have been referred for support services.

Of the 31,470 calls:

- 24,630 calls were made to older people in the priority 2 group, of which 280 were referred for support
- 6,840 calls were made to older people in the priority 3 and 4 groups, of which 180 were referred for support

The breakdown of priority groups for older people are as follows:

- Priority 1 – people aged over 70 years, who are living alone and have no email address (and not residing in residential care) – this group is considered potentially more vulnerable as they may not receive targeted information online
- Priority 2 – as above, but with an email address – this group is more likely to receive information from broader sources, such as online and email, but welfare checks still important given their living situation and potential social isolation issues
- Priority 3 – people aged over 70 years, who are living with another person / people, and have no email address – this group is less likely to need support, but welfare checks still important
- Priority 4 – as for Priority 3, but with an email address – this group is less likely to need support

### ***Transitioning from CDEM groups emergency welfare response to longer-term recovery***

We are working with NEMA and other sub-agencies around transition planning, with advice going to Cabinet.

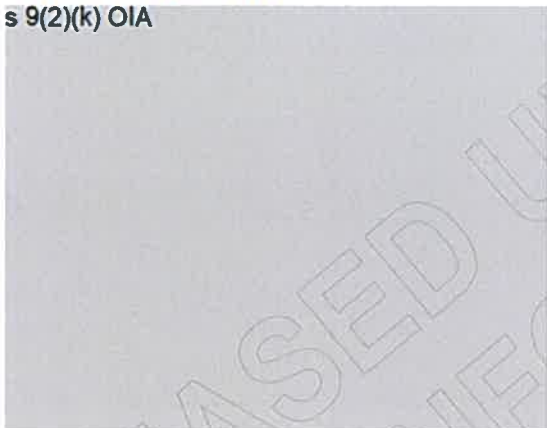
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M: [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA [REDACTED]
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
	Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA





## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #57

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	57
		Date	21 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1630
Level	Level 2 – Reduce	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency

## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>At Alert Level 2, MSD's focus is on ensuring the following services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• reopening service centres safely, encouraging phone/online channels for those who can</li> <li>• focus on a relatively narrow work programme to deliver necessary settings and capability; and</li> <li>• broadening of services provided by our partners – more fully operational support for communities, still with a focus on vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Alert Level 2</b>	<p>Most of our sites reopened on Thursday 14 May, under Alert Level 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were well prepared for reopening, our processes rolled out smoothly, and there were no major issues.</li> <li>• Low numbers of people have been turning up to sites without an appointment – we have staff appointed to triage these people, and point them to our online and phone channels as a first point of contact.</li> <li>• Face-to-face appointment numbers are low, reflecting our success in helping clients through phone and online channels.</li> <li>• Staff working in our sites have reported as being pleased with how the reopening has gone, and feeling happy and safe working with clients face-to-face again.</li> <li>• Four of our sites are yet to be reopened. Two will reopen on Monday 25 May, and the reopening dates of the other two are yet to be confirmed. Clients can still book appointments at nearby sites.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19 Response and Recovery</b>	<p><b><i>Future Operating Model</i></b></p> <p>MSD has been working on a Future Operating Model that integrates our deliverables with how we are contributing to our COVID response, meeting the increased demand for our services, and shows alignment to our strategic direction.</p> <p>We have developed a high-level description of a future state and are creating more tangible descriptions of future offerings.</p> <p><b><i>Meeting increased demand for our services</i></b></p> <p>We expect increased demand for MSD services as we respond to COVID-19 and move into recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Call centres</i></b></li> <li>• Keeping call wait times down is important, so we can ensure clients quickly get the help they need over the phone. This continues to be a major focus in AL2.</li> <li>• Despite continued high volumes of calls, we are generally managing to answer more quickly than ever.</li> <li>• <b><i>In the last two weeks of AL4 and the first two weeks of AL3, MSD contact centres answered 448,651 calls compared with 369,587</i></b></li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<p>the previous year. However, the average speed to answer reduced from 9.39 minutes in 2019 to 6.12 minutes in 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand this week has increased – following the move to AL2 and the 1.5 million emails we sent out to clients last week with AL2 information.</li> <li>• On Monday we experienced 6,000 more calls than usual for the start of the week. Wait times peaked at 14.5 minutes, but reduced to 7 minutes Tuesday and to 4 minutes Wednesday. We expected and planned for increased demand and our surge model is performing well.</li> <li>• We continue to adjust for increased demand – including recruitment, redeployment, and training.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recruitment</b></li> <li>• Our recruitment process is ongoing, with a focus on attracting and employing a diverse range of people to reflect the communities we serve.</li> <li>• We are also investigating deployment of our staff into pressured business areas and seconding staff from other agencies.</li> <li>• Since 18 March, we have hired 460 new staff, including 200 case managers.</li> </ul> <p>Increases in main benefit numbers are reported in the Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update on the MSD website, every Friday.</p> <p><b>Communications:</b></p> <p>We continue to update the Work &amp; Income website with information for our clients as the first point of contact for information.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p><b>In May so far, we have helped 3,491 people into jobs. This has already surpassed the number in April.</b></p> <p>COVID-19 is causing a significant increase in the number of people seeking employment assistance. To help New Zealanders find employment, we are building an employment service that provides tailored support; provides more and better training; and develops stronger partnerships with employers.</p> <p><b>This week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At AL2, sites have reopened and are now offering the same functions as the 35 virtual employment centres stood up under AL3.</li> <li>• Since commencement, our Rapid Return to Work service – supporting clients who've lost their jobs because of COVID-19 back into work – has helped 300 people into employment.</li> <li>• Our online recruitment tool, which connects employers with people looking for work, has been promoted across MSD communication channels this week. This has attracted high click-through rates and more job advertisements.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An all of Government survey went out to all wage subsidy recipients on Friday 15 May, to learn more about business and their experience during COVID-19. We are using these results to inform the next steps of our Employer Engagement Campaign, through which we connect with wage subsidy recipients to promote MSD services.</li> </ul>
<b>Income and housing</b>	<p><b><i>Emergency financial assistance for caregivers</i></b></p> <p>The Government has announced an increase of \$25 a week for Orphan's Benefit and Unsupported Child's Benefit (OB/UCB). The increase is effective from 6 July 2020.</p> <p><b><i>Housing</i></b></p> <p>Emergency Housing numbers continue to increase. A focus on Public Housing Needs Assessments for those in Emergency Housing is seeing Public Housing Register numbers increase also. New supply is coming on slowly.</p> <p>As at 18 May 2020 there were 73 people in Corrections-funded emergency housing motels who have been released from prison during Alert Levels 4 and 3. Over the same period, MSD have funded emergency housing for 81 people who are Corrections cohort clients and already in the community. MSD is working with Corrections to transition these clients into the most appropriate accommodation.</p> <p><b><i>Wage subsidy</i></b></p> <p>We are working on readiness for the wage subsidy extension on 10 June, announced as part of Budget 2020. This includes business and IT requirements, working with Inland Revenue to organise resourcing. MSD resourcing is needed for processing applications, answering queries and integrity. Wage subsidy-related queries remain high.</p>
<b>Communities and Welfare</b>	<p><b><i>Social service providers</i></b></p> <p>Providers appear to have made the transition to AL2 well, with inquiries to the community information inbox having slowed to only a few queries each day.</p> <p>Requests for PPE have also slowed, which is likely to be a combination of supply availability and clearer guidelines about when they are needed.</p> <p>MSD received significant funding from Budget 20 for COVID response and recovery work with communities. We are working through a plan for the distribution of the funding and the establishment of processes to support this.</p> <p><b><i>Outreach Calling Campaign to vulnerable clients – final update</i></b></p> <p>MSD has been coordinating calls during the COVID-19 pandemic to our over 70's to check in, provide support and link those needing help to appropriate provider groups. The priority for the calling was to get in touch with those who are registered with MSD as living alone, who don't have</p>



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email addresses listed, as they are the most at risk of being isolated and not knowing where to get help.

There are close to 97,000 people aged 70+ who live alone and have no email address.

MSD worked with approximately 700 callers from a range of organisations, such as Councils, CAB, Age Concern, and providers who contract to MSD – people re-deployed from their usual work in government agencies (including MSD) and non-government organisations.

The majority did not need any help. Roughly 2.5% percent of people needed support, which generally related to accessing food/groceries or medication.

For many reasons there were about 30% of the people we couldn't reach. The Citizens Advice Bureau assisted with trying different approaches to contact many of these people.

We received feedback on the positive impact this calling campaign had for those called, as well as from the volunteers themselves.

- As at Friday 8 May, we had completed over 96% of calls to the highest priority group of older clients. In total, this amounted to over 120,000 calls made, so we ended up calling a broader range of people than anticipated in our first priority group. Around 2,950 people were referred for support (including 35 who required emergency help).
- We then shifted our focus to calls to other priority groups of older clients.
- By the time calling had wrapped up on 15 May, we'd made close to 35,000 additional calls to older people in other priority groups. As expected, the calls show that the majority of people are coping well and receiving support from family or other support networks. Of the total calls made, approximately 480 (1.5%) have been referred for support services (including 6 requiring emergency help).

### ***Transitioning from CDEM groups emergency welfare response to longer-term recovery***

MSD is working alongside NEMA around transition arrangements for meeting immediate welfare needs, with oversight through Caring for Communities Governance.

This includes transition arrangements for

- 0800 numbers for all 16 CDEM regions – as demand through those phone lines begins to decrease
- Household goods and services – food security arrangements remain critical, with foodbanks continuing to experience high demand. MSD received funding through Budget 20 to establish a three-tiered model of support to ensure food security:
  - Funding to establish a commercial distribution centre, in partnership with Kiwiharvest
  - Funding two NGOs to establish a best practice model for food rescue and foodbank operation

## In-Confidence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Transitional and longer term (2 years) funding for Foodbanks</li><li>● Accommodation – working with HUD, Kaianga Ora and MBIE to ensure housing related needs are met through existing arrangements, or met in the transition period through MBIE's Temporary Accommodation Service.</li></ul> <p>Critical to the transition is to ensure there are no gaps in support, including for those groups not eligible for assistance from MSD.</p> <p>Elements of the transition and longer term recovery plans are currently being finalised.</p>
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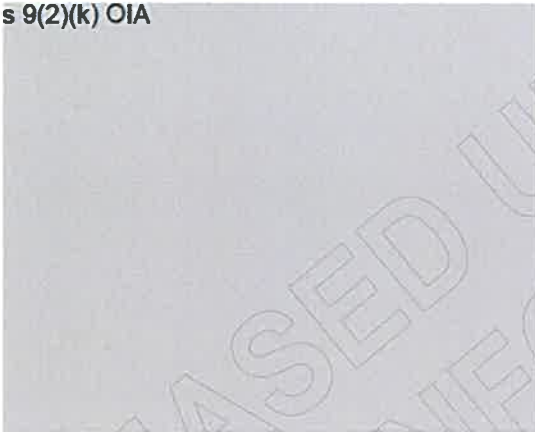
## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M [REDACTED]
	Intel & Reporting	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	Comms team	[REDACTED]
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>
Next SitRep due	<a href="#">Wednesday 8 April 2020</a>	

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA



## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #58

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	58
		Date	28 May 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1500
Level	Level 2 – Reduce	Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency



## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>At Alert Level 2, MSD's focus is on ensuring the following services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• reopening service centres safely, encouraging phone/online channels for those who can</li> <li>• focus on a relatively narrow work programme to deliver necessary settings and capability; and</li> <li>• broadening of services provided by our partners – more fully operational support for communities, still with a focus on vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19 Response and Recovery</b>	<p><b><i>Meeting increased demand for our services</i></b></p> <p>We expect increased demand for MSD services as we respond to COVID-19 and move into recovery.</p> <p>In the short term, we are focused on meeting the increased demand that will be caused by the extension of the wage subsidy scheme, the introduction of the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment and increasing benefit numbers.</p> <p>Our focus is on our readiness to meet these immediate demand needs. We are planning to meet these needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing workforce capacity and capability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Recruitment of 500 new staff by the end of June</li> <li>◦ Redeploying existing staff into pressured business areas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Furthering our digital support for meeting demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Increasing the number of MyMSD concurrent users (we have already increased capacity from 1,800 to 4,000; further capacity updates upcoming)</li> <li>◦ Increasing the performance and functionality of MyMSD</li> <li>◦ Core platform upgrades, including increasing the capacity of our task management software</li> <li>◦ Continuing to increase hardware capacity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Streamlining the application processes so we can more quickly meet clients' needs</li> </ul> <p>We are establishing a new hub in Hastings to deliver telephone support and processing with a strong recruitment focus that will support more New Zealanders into employment following the impacts of COVID-19. 50 new full-time staff will be working in the hub from 1 July, with possible expansion over the next 12-18 months.</p> <p><b><i>Call centres</i></b></p> <p>Keeping call wait times down is important, so we can ensure clients quickly get the help they need over the phone.</p> <p>Demand has been high this week, due in part to Monday's announcement of the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment. Wait times have averaged 11.5 minutes. This is similar to pre-COVID wait times, despite the increased call volumes we are experiencing.</p>

## In-Confidence

	<p>We are expecting high call volumes to continue, and continue to manage these through recruiting new staff, redeploying existing staff, and opening our new hub in Hastings.</p> <p>Increases in main benefit numbers are reported in the Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update on the MSD website, every Friday.</p> <p>46% of staff are now back in the office across our National Office campuses. We are expecting this to increase next week.</p>
<b>Employment</b>	<p><b>In May so far, we have helped 5,166 people into jobs.</b></p> <p>COVID-19 is causing a significant increase in the number of people seeking employment assistance. To help New Zealanders find employment, we are building an employment service that provides tailored support; provides more and better training; and develops stronger partnerships with employers.</p> <p><b>This week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Rapid Return to Work service teams have contacted more than 2,200 people. Of these, almost 400 people are continuing to work with us, over 800 people are now self-navigating their job search and 334 people have been supported back into work.</li> <li>• From 27 May, clients were able to use the new "Need help finding work?" function in MyMSD. This new enables our Job Connect team to contact the client to talk about our employment services.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ This function went live on 27 May. On that day, 130 people used the function to identify they wanted to talk to us about employment services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We have another round of emails going out to wage subsidy recipients as part of our Employer Engagement Campaign. This is so we can gather intel and promote MSD services to them and their staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Income and housing</b>	<p><b>COVID-19 Income Relief Payment</b></p> <p>From 8 June, people will be able to apply for a new COVID-19 Income Relief Payment, which provides additional support for those who have lost their jobs due to the impacts of COVID-19.</p> <p>The payment is designed to minimise the disruption for people that have suddenly lost their jobs, as well as give them time to look for other work.</p> <p>People will be able to apply for the new payment online. Training for our staff to deliver this payment will start next week.</p> <p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>MSD has agreed with Police to cease the COVID-19 emergency housing response for perpetrators of Police Safety Orders at the end of May. Communications have been provided to front line staff at both Police and MSD.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Wage subsidy</b></p> <p>We are continuing work on readiness for the wage subsidy extension on 10 June, announced as part of Budget 2020. Emails have been sent out to all previous wage subsidy recipients to inform them of the extension and integrity enhancements for the scheme are being worked through.</p>
<p><b>Communities and Welfare</b></p>	<p><b>Social service providers</b></p> <p>We are working on establishing a new fund to support community service providers through the COVID recovery, announced as part of Budget 20. This will be set up within the next month.</p> <p>Communications have been sent to Family Violence, Building Financial Capability service providers, and Heartland services to confirm funding arrangements from 1 July.</p> <p>We are continuing to support hapū and iwi organisations to best position whānau and communities for recovery by leading collaborative work with multiple iwi and agencies. This week, we began consultation with iwi leaders.</p> <p><b>Transitioning from CDEM groups emergency welfare response to longer-term recovery</b></p> <p>Draft guidance on planning for the transition of COVID-19 welfare functions was sent out to CDEM Group Managers and MSD Regional Commissioners for consultation on Wednesday 27 May.</p> <p>This guidance is to help plan and prepare for the transfer of immediate welfare support functions from CDEM Groups to MSD and other responsible service delivery agencies, while longer term recovery arrangements are being established. It provides a foundation for transition planning in the regions, with the acknowledgement that different regions will have different needs and situations.</p> <p><b>Food security</b></p> <p>MSD received funding through Budget 20 to establish a three-tiered model of support to ensure food security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding to establish a commercial distribution centre, in partnership with Kiwiharvest</li> <li>• Funding two NGOs to establish a best practice model for food rescue and foodbank operation</li> <li>• Transitional and longer term (2 years) funding for food banks</li> </ul> <p>Applications from food banks for Community Food Transition Grants opened 26 May and close 8 June. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by 12 June 2020. We sent communications out to food banks prior to the opening of the grants process.</p>

## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M
	Comms team	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>

### External Distribution:

s 9(2)(k) OIA





## In-Confidence

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Sitrep #59

To	s 9(2)(k) OIA	Sitrep #	59
		Date	4 June 2020
CC	MSD Distribution	Time	1630
		Declaration	1221 25 March National Emergency
Level	Level 2 – Reduce		

## In-Confidence

<b>COVID-19 Response Focus</b>	<p>At Alert Level 2, MSD's focus is on ensuring the following services continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of benefit payments, subsidies, financial support, emergency housing services, public and transitional housing, and employment services</li> <li>• reopening service centres safely, encouraging phone/online channels for those who can</li> <li>• focus on a relatively narrow work programme to deliver necessary settings and capability; and</li> <li>• broadening of services provided by our partners – more fully operational support for communities, still with a focus on vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19 Response and Recovery</b>	<p><b><i>Meeting increased demand for our services</i></b></p> <p>We expect increased demand for MSD services as we respond to COVID-19 and move into recovery.</p> <p>In the short term, we are focused on meeting the increased demand that will be caused by the extension of the wage subsidy scheme, the introduction of the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment and increasing benefit numbers.</p> <p>Our focus is on our readiness to meet these immediate demand needs. We are planning to meet these needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing workforce capacity and capability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Standing up new hubs to deliver telephone support and processing – the Hawkes Bay hub will be working from 1 July, with a site in Whanganui to follow soon after.</li> <li>◦ Recruitment of 500 new staff by the end of June – 225 staff have been hired so far.</li> <li>◦ Redeploying existing staff into pressured business areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identity, Verification, and Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ A 'portal' is being developed between Inland Revenue and MSD to help with information sharing for the wage subsidy extension and COVID-19 Income Relief Payment, approved by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Furthering our digital support for meeting demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Increasing the number of MyMSD concurrent users (we have already increased capacity from 1,800 to 4,000, further capacity updates upcoming).</li> <li>◦ Increasing the performance and functionality of MyMSD .</li> <li>◦ Core platform upgrades, including increasing the capacity of our task management software.</li> <li>◦ Continuing to increase hardware capacity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Streamlining the application processes so we can more quickly meet clients' needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ From 8 June, we're making changes to how we process applications for Jobseeker Support – to enable quicker decision making and processing of benefit grants.</li> <li>◦ Much of the application will be auto-populated for certain types of clients. Staff have received training this week, ready to go live on Monday.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## In-Confidence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is the first in a series of changes we'll be making, and we'll be adding other financial assistance types over time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Call centres</b></p> <p>Keeping call wait times down is important, so we can ensure clients quickly get the help they need over the phone.</p> <p>Demand has been high this week, following the long weekend, with wait times averaging more than 16 minutes. We expect to recover these wait times today.</p> <p>Our call centres have been focused on training staff to answer queries about the wage subsidy extension and the Income Relief Payment, so we can respond to demand when those schemes go live next week.</p> <p>We have also been putting staff on emergency and hardship grant queues, so we can provide assistance over the phone and keep our site appointments down.</p> <p>In AL1, our sites will continue to operate as they have been in AL2 – only those who have appointments will be able to enter our offices. While we welcome clients into our sites who need face-to-face appointments, we can increasingly provide a better and faster service through calls or online.</p> <p>Increases in main benefit numbers are reported in the Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update on the MSD website, every Friday.</p>
<b>Employment</b>	<p><b>In May, we helped 6080 people into jobs.</b></p> <p>COVID-19 is causing a significant increase in the number of people seeking employment assistance. To help New Zealanders find employment, we are building an employment service that provides tailored support; provides more and better training; and develops stronger partnerships with employers.</p> <p><b>This week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80-100 people a day have been accessing our Rapid Return to Work service through MyMSD, many of whom are highly skilled and ready to start work immediately. Our teams have supported more than 330 people into work through this service. We are expecting increasing demand for the service following the introduction of the wage subsidy extension and Income Relief Payment.</li> </ul>
<b>Income and housing</b>	<p><b>Wage subsidy</b></p> <p>We are ready to roll out the wage subsidy extension on Wednesday 10 June. Applications will be open until 1 September 2020. If employers have been paid the original wage subsidy, they will need to wait for that 12-week period to end before they reapply. MSD will send a reminder to employers when it is time to reapply. The minimum decline in actual or predicted revenue has been decreased from 50% to 40%.</p> <p>Staff have been trained to process applications for the extension. A call has gone out to staff for help with processing applications.</p>

## In-Confidence

	<p><b>COVID-19 Income Relief Payment</b></p> <p>The payment is ready to go live on Monday 8 June. Clients already receiving a benefit, and who have lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID-19, can opt to switch to the new payment.</p> <p>Staff training started this week, and will be continued over the weekend. We have run systems testing for the payment and will have a range of post-implementation support measures in place.</p> <p><b>New Zealand Superannuation Modernisation</b></p> <p>As part of the Budget 19, the Government announced proposed changes to New Zealand Superannuation (NZS) and Veteran's pension (VP). The changes aim to simplify these payments and make them better reflect our society today.</p> <p>A decision has been made to delay introducing these proposed changes until 9 November 2020. This will allow us to continue our focus on supporting people affected by COVID-19 and ensure they get the help they need.</p> <p>Existing clients will continue to receive their payments from us as normal.</p>
<p><b>Communities and Welfare</b></p>	<p><b>Social service providers</b></p> <p>We are working on establishing a new fund to support community service providers through the COVID recovery – the <b>community Capability Resilience Fund</b> – announced as part of Budget 20. This will be set up within the next month. So far, we have designed the criteria, application and approval process.</p> <p><b>Transitioning from CDEM groups emergency welfare response to longer-term recovery</b></p> <p>MSD and NEMA have finalised Transition guidance to support regional CDEM Groups and MSD Regional teams. Many regions have started transition of key welfare functions, including standing down 0800 numbers and referring people directly to key agencies for support.</p> <p>Regions that transitioned 0800 numbers from COP Tuesday 2 June included: Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Central, Wellington and Canterbury. And from Friday 5 June: East Coast, Nelson / Tasman and West Coast. Auckland and Southern regions are working with their respective CDEM Groups on transition planning.</p> <p>The Government Helpline will remain operational as a key channel for people seeking information on supports available, and referral to the correct agency. Operations will continue be reviewed according to need until transition arrangements are complete.</p>



## In-Confidence

	<p><b>Food security</b></p> <p>A new Food Secure Communities web-page has been set up that provides details of funding opportunities and other support for foodbanks, food rescue and other community food services. Applications for short term funding in the transition from Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) opened on 26 May. Longer term funding for increased demand, as well as for creating Food Secure Communities opened on 29 May.</p> <p>We have asked a number of organisations to promote the funding opportunities through their relevant provider networks, including: Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups, the philanthropy sector, relevant MSD, Oranga Tamariki and Te Puni Kokiri staff, MSD and Oranga Tamariki newsletters and a number of NGO umbrella groups (including Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective and food rescue networks). We've also asked MSD regions to make contact with organisations in their area.</p>
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## In-Confidence

### Key Contacts & Sign-off

Key Contacts	Role/Function	Email
	DCE COVID-19	E: s 9(2)(a) OIA M
	Comms team	s 9(2)(k) OIA
	MSD Data (publicly released weekly Tuesdays by 9 am)	<a href="https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html">https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-data.html</a>

External Distribution:  
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