



## Briefing Note: November update on the Urgent Response Fund (COVID-19)

To	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc	Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
Date	6 November 2020	Priority	Medium
Security Level	In Confidence	METIS No	1244130
Drafter	Georgina Muir	DDI	s 9(2)(a)
Key Contact	Susan Howan	DDI	
Messaging seen by Communications team	No	Round Robin	No

### Purpose of Report

This report updates you on the Urgent Response Fund (URF), including:

- analysis of the distribution of funding to date
- the needs being identified, support being put in place, and examples of innovation
- our approach to monitoring the progress being made by the schools, kura and early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo in delivering the URF and the interim outcomes being achieved.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.


☒ Agree ☐ Disagree

### Summary

- The URF provides \$50 million in 2020/21 to support children and young people's attendance, re-engagement with learning and wellbeing following the COVID-19 lockdowns. Over \$23 million of URF funding has been distributed to date.

  
Katrina Casey  
Deputy Secretary  
Sector Enablement & Support Group

6/11/2020

  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

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## Background

1. The Urgent Response Fund (URF) provides \$50 million in 2020/21 to support children and young people's attendance, re-engagement with learning and wellbeing after the COVID-19 lockdowns.
2. We have used the Equity Index to allocate the URF funding to regions. The Equity Index weights funding to regions with relatively higher levels of disadvantage, where the impact of COVID-19 on well-being, attendance, and engagement will be most significant.
3. The regional Directors of Education approve applications, working with regional sector groups, to ensure that local knowledge and priorities inform funding decisions.
4. This update follows previous reports on 1 September and 8 October 2020 [METIS 1239151 and 1242528 refer] and fortnightly updates in the Education Weekly Update (EWU).

## Allocation of URF funding to 28 October 2020

5. Annex 1 provides a national summary of the allocation of URF funding to 28 October 2020.
6. In the latest four-week period, 915 applications valued at \$8.2 million were approved. These 915 applications together support 115,425 ākonga.
7. Approximately 10% of the funding to date has been allocated to early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo. It is not compulsory for children to attend early learning services, unlike school and kura. As a result, we are seeing a higher level of need in schools and kura. Directors of Education are reporting considerable contact with the early learning sector regarding URF but have had relatively fewer applications.
8. Annex 2 provides a regional summary of the allocation of URF funding to 28 October for Auckland. In the four-week period to 28 October, 450 applications were approved in the Auckland region, accounting for 28% of the total regional allocation (\$4.1m). Only 122 new applications were received in Auckland during this period. These figures therefore reflect the region's progress in working through applications in its pipeline. At 28 October, the Auckland region had 52% of its fund remaining. In the week 28 October to 4 November an additional 44 applications valued at \$0.347 million have been approved.
9. To ensure the equitable distribution of the URF within the region, the Auckland regional group has set aside proportions of the fund to support priority applications.

Application type	Amount allocated (\$)
1. Indigenous pathways	\$2,500,000
2. Pacific education	\$1,500,000
3. Decile 1-3 and/or Māori 30% or greater and/or Pacific 30% or greater	\$4,320,704
4. Decile 4+	\$6,189,421
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,510,125</b>



10. Since the last briefing [METIS 1242528 refers], the number of new URF applications submitted through the online form has slowed. A total of 519 new applications were submitted in the four-week period to 28 October, compared with a total of 3,741 for the two previous periods<sup>1</sup>. At 28 October, 56% of all submitted applications had been approved, up from 40% at 30 September; 19% of applications were under consideration, down from 42% at 30 September<sup>2</sup>.
11. The 808 applications which are still under consideration request over \$200 million in URF funding. Because these applications are being worked through, this number contains errors as well as out of scope applications.
12. Directors of Education and their teams are working proactively with the sector to support the application process. They are also working closely with their regional groups to prioritise applications for support in Term 4 and plan for the start of the 2021 school year.

### ***Schools and kura in receipt of URF funding***

13. We have analysed the profile of the 1340 schools and kura with approved URF applications using key metrics relating to decile, priority learners and attendance<sup>3</sup>. Regional offices are using regional level data to support local decision making and identify opportunities for targeting.
14. Low decile schools and kura, and their ākonga, overall, are accessing their share of the URF funding. However, there is still a large proportion of low decile schools and kura which have not yet had applications approved. Regions are following up with these schools.
15. As implementation progresses ensuring schools and kura with high proportions of Māori learners have equitable access to URF funding is critical. Our analysis shows that there are also opportunities to better target schools and kura with high proportions of Pacific learners, to improve outcomes for this priority group. The percentage of Pacific learners in schools and kura which have approved URF applications remains broadly aligned to the percentage of Pacific learners in all eligible schools and kura.
16. Responding to needs around attendance remains a focus for the URF, so it is important that schools and kura with the greatest attendance challenges are accessing URF funding. We will continue to analyse this as more recent attendance data becomes available.

### **Needs and interventions**

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17. Applications demonstrate the high levels of stress and disruption experienced by ākonga as a result of COVID-19, and the impact this is having on their behaviour, relationships, engagement with learning and academic progress at school, kura and early learning me ngā kōhanga reo. This continues to be particularly heightened in Auckland, following the impact of the second lockdown.
18. Annex 3 provides examples of the breadth of needs, the range of proposed interventions and some examples of innovation included in URF applications.

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<sup>1</sup> 4 August to 30 September 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Reasons applications are not being progressed include where the use of the fund does not meet the purpose or is not in scope, as well as duplicate applications and those submitted in error. Directors of Education are working closely with applicants whose applications are not progressed, redirecting them to other funds where relevant.

<sup>3</sup> Figures relate to state and state integrated schools and kura only, and therefore exclude URF applications from early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo.

## Understanding the impact of the URF

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19. During November we are undertaking an interim outcomes survey with the education providers that received URF funding by the start of Term 4. Schools, kura and early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo will be asked to report back on their progress in using the URF and the interim outcomes being achieved.
20. Some initial data from this work will be available in the December URF update, with more detailed analysis being prepared for early 2021. We will use the analysis of the interim outcomes survey to inform the implementation of the URF for the remainder of the funding period (to June 2021). This will include supporting Directors of Education, regional groups and the sector to understand what is working well and to overcome any implementation challenges.
21. Attendance data collection for Term 3 is nearing completion. We expect to provide you with analysis of attendance over time in schools and kura which have received URF funding as the funding progressively takes effect in our December 2020 update.

## Next Steps

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22. We will continue to update you fortnightly in the Education Weekly Update on key metrics for the URF, and we will update this Briefing Note each month.

## Proactive Release

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23. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

## Annexes

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|----------|--|
| Annex 1: | National summary of URF allocation (4 August to 28 October 2020)           |
| Annex 2: | Regional summary of URF allocation: Auckland (4 August to 28 October 2020) |
| Annex 3: | Needs, interventions and innovations                                       |



# COVID-19 URGENT RESPONSE FUND – National summary of URF allocation (4 August to 28 October 2020)

We have approved 2,394 applications to the URF totalling \$22.9m. The URF is currently supporting 274,170 learners, more than 130,000 of whom are in Auckland.

## Early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo

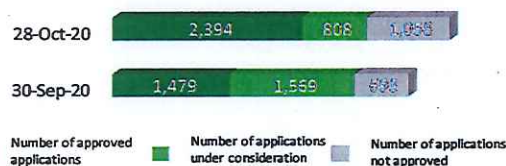
- 25,357 learners supported across 393 services
- 407 approved applications, valued at \$2.4m
- Average funding of \$96 per learner

## Schools and kura

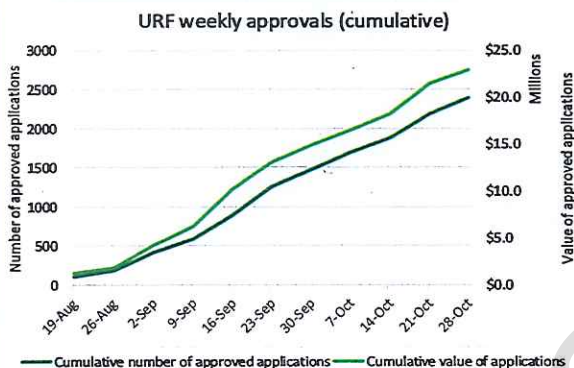
- 248,813 learners supported across 1,340 schools
- 1,987 approved applications valued at \$20.5m
- Average funding of \$82 per learner

56% of the 4,260 submitted applications have been approved.

## Pipeline of URF applications



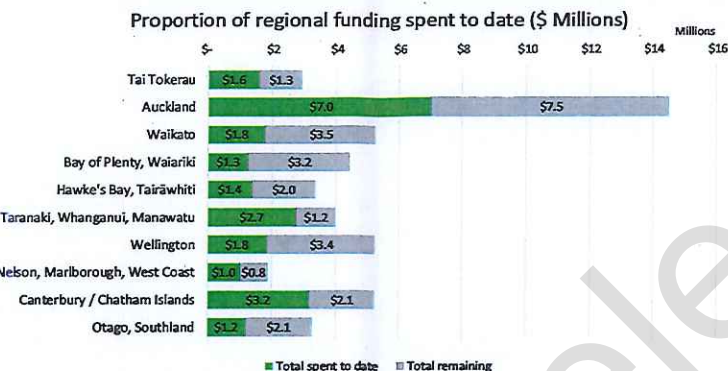
Both the number and value of applications approved has increased steadily over time.



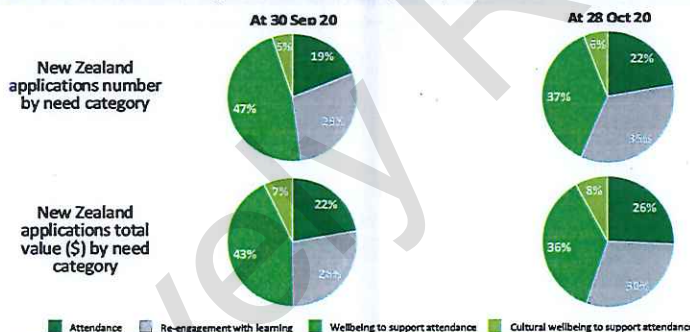
A significant proportion of schools and kura in lower deciles have not yet accessed URF funding. We will prioritise contact with these schools and kura.

	Decile									
New Zealand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total eligible schools and kura	297	255	243	238	245	226	244	233	229	234
Eligible schools and kura without URF funding	148	122	100	94	107	101	113	104	108	110
Percentage of eligible schools and kura without	50%	48%	41%	39%	44%	45%	46%	45%	47%	47%

Nationally, 46% of the URF has been allocated. For the period 30 September to 28 October 2020, Auckland spent 28% (\$4.1m) of its \$14.5m allocation.

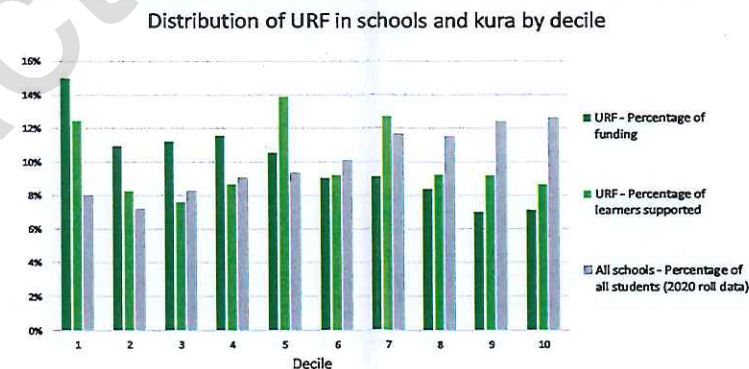


While the URF at 28 October continues to have a strong focus on needs related to *Wellbeing to support attendance*, the number and value of applications in the three other needs categories has increased, as a proportion.



We have made progress in ensuring learners in decile 1 schools and kura are well represented in URF funding approved and the number of learners supported.

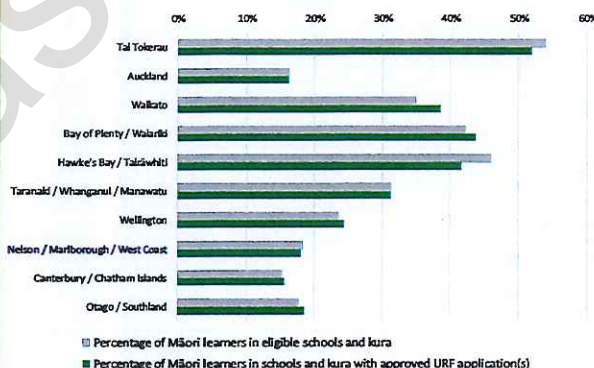
Note: The spike in the percentage of learners being supported in decile 5 is due to five large, cluster based applications which account for almost 20,000 learners.



There are opportunities to better target the URF to ensure we are supporting schools and kura with:

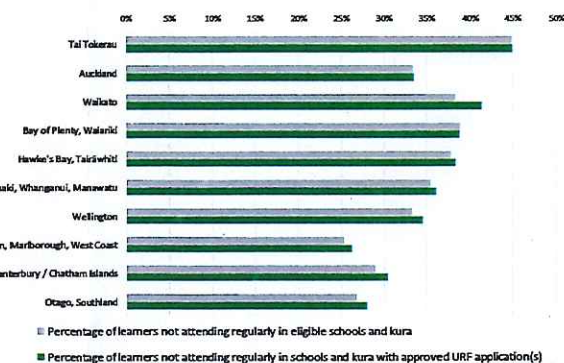
- higher proportions of Māori and Pacific learners
- lower levels of regular attendance.

## Distribution of URF in schools and kura by percentage of Māori learners



The percentage of Māori learners in schools and kura which have approved URF applications has increased since 30 September in eight out of ten regions.

## Distribution of URF in schools and kura by percentage of learners not attending regularly



The percentage of learners not attending regularly in schools and kura with approved URF applications is the same or higher for all regions than the percentage of learners not attending regularly in all eligible schools and kura.

## Notes:

*School Rols* data is from July 2020 roll returns.

*Attendance* data is from Term 2 of 2020 as at 16 September 2020. This is only for the 7 post-lockdown weeks of Term 2 and provided prior to finalisation of this data collection. This data is provided on 89% of schools. There may be collection bias, with many of the schools and kura with missing data being the ones with the lowest levels of attendance. This is a partial view of Term 2 attendance data produced for this analysis. The full Term 2 attendance report and accompanying data will be provided by the end of this year.



# Auckland COVID-19 URGENT RESPONSE FUND – Regional summary of URF allocation (from 4 August 2020 to 28 October 2020)

Auckland has approved 776 applications totalling \$7m. This is providing support to 130,462 learners.

Note: 44 additional applications valued at \$347k have been approved since 28 October 2020.

## Early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo

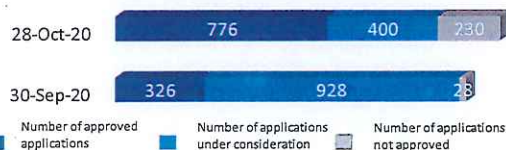
- 10,820 learners supported across 148 services
- 153 approved applications, valued at \$0.6m
- Average funding of \$55 per learner

## Schools and kura

- 119,642 learners supported across 359 schools
- 623 approved applications valued at \$6.4m
- Average funding of \$54 per learner

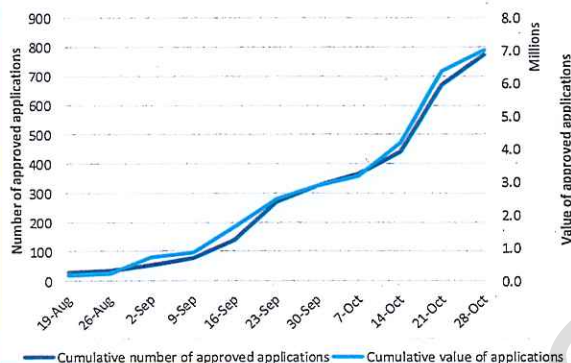
55% of submitted applications have been approved.

## Pipeline of URF applications: Auckland



The number of new applications being approved each week peaked in the week 14 – 21 October 2020.

## Auckland URF weekly approvals (cumulative)

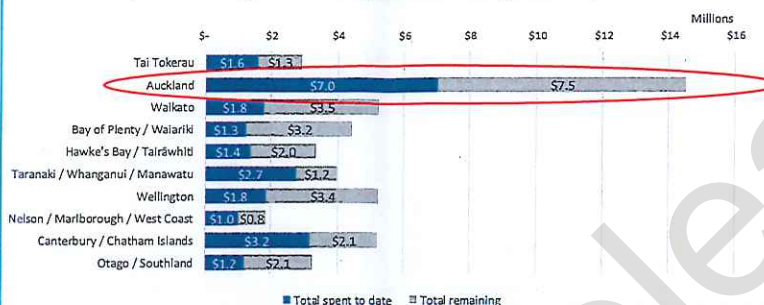


Of the 199 decile 1-3 schools and kura in Auckland, 64 have not yet received URF funding. The regional team will prioritise contact with these schools.

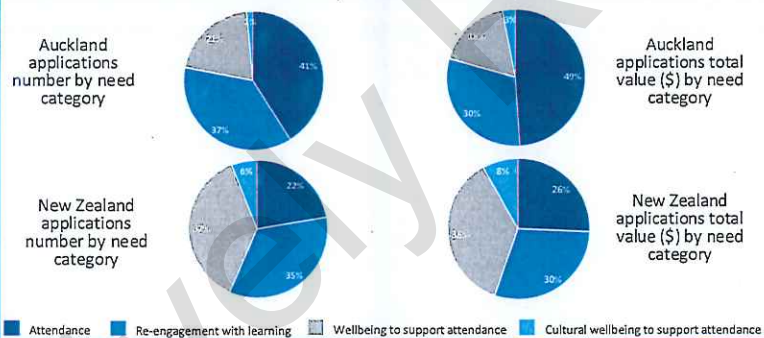
Auckland	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Total eligible schools and kura	95	51	53	41	38	29	48	43	59	65
Eligible schools and kura without URF funding	35	15	14	13	11	6	10	15	23	22
Percentage of eligible schools and kura without	37%	29%	26%	32%	29%	21%	21%	35%	39%	34%

Within Auckland, 48% of the region's funding (\$7m) has been allocated. Nationally, 46% of the URF has been allocated.

## Proportion of regional funding spent to date (\$ Millions)

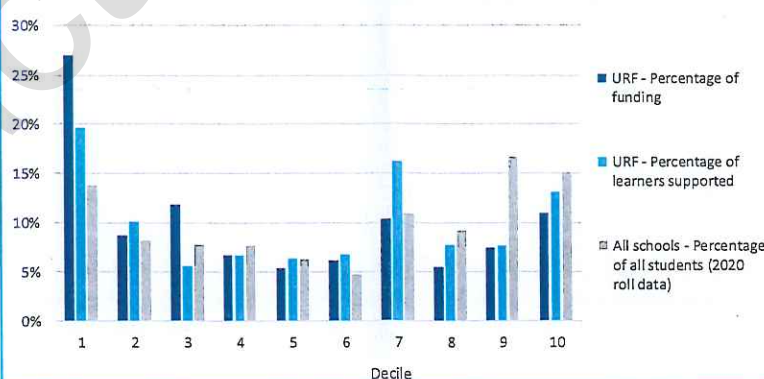


In Auckland, the number and value of approved applications focused strongly on needs related to Attendance when compared to all New Zealand.



Learners in low decile schools and kura are well represented in the proportion of URF funding received and the number of learners supported.

## Auckland: Distribution of URF in schools and kura by decile

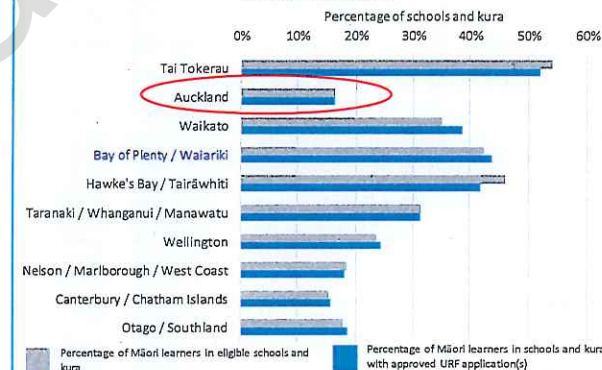


Across New Zealand there are opportunities to better target the URF to ensure we are supporting schools and kura with:

- higher proportions of Māori and Pacific learners
- lower levels of regular attendance.

In Auckland, the percentage of Māori learners in schools and kura with approved URF applications is slightly lower than the percentage of learners in all eligible schools.

## Distribution of URF in schools and kura by percentage of Māori learners



In Auckland, schools and kura with approved URF applications have the same number of learners not attending regularly (based on Term 2 data) as the number of students in all eligible schools.

## Distribution of URF in schools and kura by percentage of learners not attending regularly



## Notes:

School Rolls data is from July 2020 roll returns.

Attendance data is from Term 2 of 2020 as at 16 September 2020. This is only for the 7 post-lockdown weeks of Term 2 and provided prior to finalisation of this data collection. This data is provided on 89% of schools. There may be collection bias, with many of the schools and kura with missing data being the ones with the lowest levels of attendance. This is a partial view of Term 2 attendance data produced for this analysis. The full Term 2 attendance report and accompanying data will be provided by the end of this year.



## COVID-19 Urgent Response Fund – Examples of Needs, interventions and innovations

### Attendance

#### Early learning

In Waikato, a kindergarten has faced challenges with children maintaining regular attendance and parents paying their fees. Irregular attendance has presented teachers with unsettled children, emotional outbursts and breakdowns due to interrupted routines. Parents are anxious about the safety of their children in terms of contracting sicknesses. The centre has employed additional staff and created smaller room spaces to maintain safe, warm and calming areas to improve attendance.

#### Primary and secondary

An Auckland secondary school with a very high Māori and Pacific roll is using a range of support across the school to improve attendance. This project includes the extension of their attendance officer to a full-time role, support staff for their lunch programme and education advocates to support students into 'earning and learning' pathways. This involves devising education packages that allow students a combination of employment and education opportunities.

A culturally diverse school, catering for Years 1 to 6 in Henderson, Auckland has experienced extreme difficulty getting their learners and whānau back to school. After the first lockdown, 94 of the 550 learners did not return to school. After the second lockdown the number of learners not returning to school grew to 142 as a result of community anxiety and trauma. Funding for teacher release time to meet and connect with the community and whānau, and the purchase of resilience resources is beginning to show a significant improvement in attendance rates.

### Re-engagement with learning

#### Early learning

In Napier, an early learning centre has noticed an increase of tamariki and whānau who are unsettled, have a lowered sense of security, and a decline in participation. Tamariki are often from vulnerable families who display challenging behaviours which require more support and resources from the teaching team. They intend to use a social worker to spend time both in the centre and out in the community to create a stronger connection to increase participation from whānau.

#### Primary and secondary

In Rotorua, a secondary school has set up a credit catch up centre to support students by providing a space four times a week after school with teacher guidance for students with academic, learning and pastoral support needs.

In the Bay of Plenty, Waiariki a secondary school has a group of boys who have become disengaged with learning and playing sport. Post-lockdown, the school has seen a resurgence in gang affiliation to east side/west side with organised fighting after school and on the weekends. This behaviour has since come into the school. The school is having to structure play and supervise a large group of boys in the playground. They are intending to employ a young male mentor to support these boys in the classroom, as well as on the playground at lunchtime.

### Wellbeing to support attendance

#### Early learning

In Christchurch, a preschool with a high number of vulnerable families has worked on transitioning children back to their centre. Many families needed time to share concerns about their children and the behaviours being exhibited. Teacher release time has helped a trusted staff member to connect and communicate with whānau.

#### Primary and secondary

A small, rural, predominantly Māori decile 1 school in Bay of Plenty, Waiariki has identified that their whānau and community are struggling. This is impacting on their tamariki in various ways; anger outbursts, anxiety and social dysfunction. Lately they have found it to be increasingly difficult to provide the extra support needed. For their younger children they are seeing continual bickering, withdrawal from learning groups and hiding visible signs of sadness or fear. For their older students it is anger, defiance and lack of resilience to disappointing situations. They will use the URF to run Lego and Robotics play sessions for tamariki of all ages. This will engage children in socially interacting with each other in a fun, respectful and imaginative way. It will allow them to take the time and space to work together, achieve together, and enjoy each other's company. The programme creates opportunities to feed in positive language that assists in expressing emotions, actions and new vocabulary. They also hope the fun factor of Lego and Robotics sessions will encourage students to want to come to school.

In Tai Tokerau, a school is responding to direct and indirect family issues that are impacting on the wellbeing of their learners, due to loss of employment, housing instability, and Oranga Tamariki removal of children during the lockdown. The funding will be used to:

- support four learners that have regressed in their achievement, social and emotional behaviours
- support four children transitioning to a new school following a changed care arrangement
- support seven children with mild intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and FASD living with whānau in a three-bedroom home.

### Cultural wellbeing to support attendance

#### Early learning

In Auckland, a kindergarten is working with 14 cultural groups for whom English is a second language. The majority live in rented high density accommodation with generations living together. Tamariki and whānau are experiencing stresses and anxiety caused by the 'unknown' with many of their family members living overseas in countries with high numbers of COVID cases. They intend to use a Malayalam, Urdu or Hindi speaking team member to enable authentic connections and strengthen engagement in learning and emotional wellbeing, with the aim of improving attendance.

#### Primary and secondary

An Auckland school catering for years 1 to 8 with a roll of around two-thirds Māori ākonga is using a 'Hauora Register' to assess the emotional and social wellbeing of its ākonga. It has identified 50 ākonga that are struggling socially and emotionally to access learning, underachieving academically and needing adult support to manage their behaviour. Many of the ākonga are significantly exposed to alcohol and/or drugs in their homes and lost routine. A goal is to create a space called Whare Marino (calm, still, tranquil, undisturbed) given by a local rangatira. Whānau will support learning in this space and support whanaungatanga and mana whenua. The kura will support this room by employing a highly respected whaea as a part time te reo teacher. The whaea is closely connected to many of the whānau and will enhance the mauri needs of ākonga.

A Wellington kura is working with eleven ākonga who are not attending regularly and/or are frequently late for school. Mondays are the most frequent day for absences and/or lateness and are also the hardest day for teaching as ākonga can be tired and come to school unprepared with no books, food, or sports gear. Some whānau are condoning ākonga staying home if they don't like an activity such as cross-country, or because it is raining or a birthday. Taiaha is very popular with the ākonga so a taiaha tutor is now employed on Monday mornings to get the week off to a good start.