



## Education Report: Continuation of emergency payments for casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura, and the future of financial support for the casual schooling workforce

|   |  |                     |             |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>To:</b>                                    | Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance<br>Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education |                     |             |
| <b>Date:</b>                                  | 3 December 2021  | <b>Priority:</b>    | High        |
| <b>Security Level:</b>                        | In confidence  | <b>METIS No:</b>    | 1278040     |
| <b>Drafter:</b>                               | Isabella Sutherland  | <b>DDI:</b>         | 04 463 2887 |
| <b>Key Contact:</b>                           | Anna Welanyk   | <b>DDI:</b>         | 04 463 7745 |
| <b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b> | No   | <b>Round Robin:</b> | Yes         |

### Purpose of Report

- This paper seeks your approval to cease the provision of emergency financial support to casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura in Auckland following the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework. We recommend that:
  - For day relievers and casual non-teaching workers who are engaged mainly by secondary schools, emergency payments will cease with effect from 1 December.
  - For day relievers and casual non-teaching workers who are engaged mainly by primary schools, emergency payments will cease at the end of the current school term, ie 20 December.
- Your approval is sought to draw down \$0.821 million from the tagged contingency *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* to fund the last payments to be made under the scheme.

### Summary

- Due to the COVID-19 resurgence in late August 2021, the Emergency Payment Scheme was re-established for day relief staff and casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura who are paid by timesheet, and who would have their income *significantly* disrupted due to Public Health measures operating at COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3, namely schools and kura being closed for face-to-face learning for the majority of students.

4. The emergency payment scheme initially supported around 15,000 casual staff across the country while the whole of the country was at Alert Levels 3 and 4, and around 4,700 casual staff in Auckland and other regions when they were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2.
5. The scheme has played an important role in maintaining the temporary workforce in Auckland and other regions during the period they have been at Alert Level 3. Many day relief teachers receive significant proportion of their income from casual work and are reliant on this income, while the casual workforce is relied on by schools and kura to continue learning programmes during periods of sick or other leave. It has been important to both provide income support for this workforce and retain relief teachers for when schools return to more normal operations.
6. Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework (the Framework) broad regional closures of school sites are not expected and day relief teachers can be expected to return to close to normal patterns of employment, particularly in 2022 when the Framework is fully adopted. Accordingly, we recommend that the scheme is progressively closed as term 4, 2021 concludes.
7. In order to ensure the support provided remains targeted to need, while being fiscally manageable, we recommend that the scheme is closed in two phases:
  - 7.1. Support for day relief and casual workers in secondary schools within the Auckland boundary would cease from 1 December. This recognises that many secondary schools in Auckland are operating close to their normal patterns of relief teacher engagement for this point in the school year.
  - 7.2. We recommend payments continue for relief teachers and casual workers who are engaged by primary schools within the Auckland boundary until the conclusion of term 4 on 20 December. This because many primary schools are continuing to operate as if they are in Alert Level 3 for this period and primary school casual workers in Auckland are continuing to report a significant drop in work as usual patterns of face-to-face learning have not yet resumed.
8. To date, support has been provided to casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura as follows:
  - 8.1. Approximately \$10.800 million was re-prioritised from non-departmental appropriations for primary, secondary and learning support to enable the Ministry of Education to make these payments, which initially covered the period of 18 to 24 August.
  - 8.2. On 24 August, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group agreed that this support should continue up to 7 September and provided a further \$10.800 million for this purpose. On 8 September, emergency payments were made to eligible casual workers for the period 18 August to 7 September.
  - 8.3. Additional funding was also provided in the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency for further emergency support for casual schooling workers as required, and you were jointly authorised to approve the drawdown of this funding [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]. Subsequently, you have agreed to the following payments and associated draw down of funding:

- a further \$3.850 million up to 21 September while Auckland remained at Alert Level 4 and the rest of country moved to Alert Level 2 [12 September METIS 1270900 refers]. Emergency payments were made to casual Auckland staff for this period on 22 September.
- a total of \$3.600 million up to 5 October, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [28 September METIS 1272148 refers].
- a further \$4.700 million up to 2 November, while parts of the Waikato and the Auckland regions were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [29 October METIS 1273863 refers].
- a total of \$4.200 million up to 16 November, while parts of the Waikato and Northland regions, and the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3, and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [10 November METIS 1276429 refers].
- a total of \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 30 November, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [24 November METIS 1277295 refers]

9. In total \$41.550 million in funding has been provided for the scheme.

10. The support which has been provided is summarised below:

| Pay period          | Total workers receiving payment | Cost (\$million) | Average payment per worker |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 11/08 – 24/08/2021  | 13,898                          | 6.668            | \$480                      |
| 25/08 – 07/09/2021  | 16,658                          | 11.649           | \$699                      |
| 08/09 – 21/09/2021  | 7,938                           | 4.283            | \$540                      |
| 22/09 – 05/10/2021  | 3,891                           | 3.511            | \$902                      |
| 06/10 – 19/10/2021* | 781                             | 0.355            | \$455                      |
| 20/10 – 02/11/2021  | 4,710                           | 4.145            | \$880                      |
| 03/11 – 16/11/2021  | 4,598                           | 3.989            | \$868                      |
| 17/11 – 30/11/2021  | 3,785                           | 3.391            | \$745                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>-</b>                        | <b>37.991</b>    | <b>-</b>                   |

\* this pay period covered the term 3 to term 4 school holidays

*Recent and upcoming changes to COVID-19 restrictions and Public Health settings*

11. On 29 November, the Government confirmed that the country will move to managing community cases of COVID-19 through the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December 2021. As we have previously noted, the Protection Framework introduces a 3-level 'traffic light' system divided into Green, Orange and Red levels. Schools and kura are open at all levels, with additional health measures in place at the Orange and Red levels. Accordingly:

11.1. Senior students in Years 11, 12 and 13 have been able to return to learning onsite

11.2. Students in Years 1 to 10 in Alert Level 3 settings were able to return to onsite learning at schools and kura from 17 November. For most students in Years 1 to 8, this continues to be in a part-time capacity, however Year 9 and 10 students are able to return to face-to-face learning full-time.

12. On 10 November, you made the in-principle decision [METIS 1276429 refers] that automatic emergency financial support for the casual schooling workforce would cease when the COVID-19 Protection Framework replaced the Alert Levels structure.

*Emergency payments for the casual schooling workforce beyond 30 November*

13. The COVID-19 Protection Framework will come into effect from 3 December for most schools and kura, however, those in Auckland have been advised that they will retain current public health measures that are in place at Alert Level 3, Step 2 for the remainder of the year.

14. We anticipate that secondary relief teachers' and other casual workers ability to engage in work is likely to be similar when compared to the same period in the previous year. This is because:

14.1. Students in years 9 to 13 are able to return to onsite learning; and

14.2. the demand for relief teachers in secondary schools and kura during Term 4 would usually be less than at other times throughout the schooling year, as senior secondary students are engaged on study leave.

15. However, at primary schools and kura in Auckland, students are expected to return to face-to-face learning in only a part-time capacity until the end of the schooling year on 20 December. We expect there will be increased opportunities for relief teachers and casual workers to engage in work, however we have heard accounts from the sector and our union partners that work opportunities remain limited while the public health measures for Alert Level 3, Step 2 continue.

16. We expect costs for the continuation of the emergency payment in the Auckland region up to 20 December for primary school workers, to be approximately \$4.380 million. As \$41.550 million has been provided for the scheme, and actual costs to date have been \$37.991 million, further funding of \$0.821million will be required to make the last payments from the scheme. We recommend this is provided from the Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura tagged operating contingency established for this purpose.

17. If you agree to continue emergency payments as proposed and appropriate funding accordingly, the remaining balance of the Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura tagged operating contingency will be \$0.829 million.
18. Support will also cease for casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2, whose ability to gain employment has been directly affected by COVID-19, with effect from 1 December. Uptake of this support has been very low.

## Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

A. **Note** that on 24 August 2021, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]:

- i. Agreed to the provision of emergency support for casual workers who had worked on at least one occasion for a State or State-Integrated school or kura in the 90 days leading up to 17 August when the country moved to Alert Level 4, the extent of which will be heavily influenced by the period over which COVID-19 Alert Level 2, Alert Level 3, or Alert Level 4 restrictions remain in place
- ii. Set funding aside in a tagged operating contingency for this purpose, as below:

|  | \$m – increase/(decrease) |         |         |         |                   |
|--|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
|  | 2021/22                   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26& Outyears |
| Contingency: Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura | 21.6                      | -       | -       | -       | -                 |

- iii. Authorised you to jointly approve the drawdown of the tagged operating contingency

**Noted**

**Noted**

B. **Note** that on 24 November, you jointly [METIS 1277295 refers]:

- i. Agreed that emergency support was continued for the next payroll period (17 to 30 November) while the Auckland region remained at Alert Level 3
- ii. Noted that the scheme would be available on application at Alert Level 2 for the rest of the country
- iii. Approved changes to appropriations to provide up to \$3.600 million for these payments, with funding to be drawn down from the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency.
- iv. Noted that the Ministry would provide further advice about the future of the Emergency Payment Scheme beyond 30 November and how this would be funded, if the COVID-19 Protection Framework was not in place by 30 November

**Noted**

**Noted**

C. **Agree** that the provision of support under this scheme for casual workers will cease with effect from:

- i. For relief teachers and casual worker mainly employed in secondary education: the end of last full pay period before the COVID-19 Protection Framework is introduced (i.e., from 1 December)
- ii. For other relief teachers and casual non-teaching staff in the Auckland region: from the end of term 4, 2021 (ie no later than 20 December)

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree / Disagree**

D. **Note** that, if you agree to recommendation C support will be continued up to and including 20 December for relief teachers and casual non-teaching staff mainly employed in primary education in the Auckland region

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree / Disagree**

E. **Agree** that support on application for causal workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2, whose ability to gain employment has been directly affected by COVID-19 is ceased from 1 December

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree / Disagree**

F. **Approve** the following changes to appropriations with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

|   | \$m - increase/(decrease) |                |                |                |                                   |
|---|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Vote Education<br/>Minister of Education</b>         | <b>2021/22</b>            | <b>2022/23</b> | <b>2023/24</b> | <b>2024/25</b> | <b>2025/26 &amp;<br/>Outyears</b> |
| <b>Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:</b> |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| <b>Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA</b>           |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| <i>Non-Departmental Output Expense:</i>                 |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| Learning Support and Alternative Education              |                           | -              | -              |                | -                                 |
| <b>Primary and Secondary Education MCA</b>              |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| <i>Departmental Output Expense:</i>                     |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| Support and Resources for Education Providers           |                           | -              | -              | -              | -                                 |
| (funded by Revenue Crown)                               |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| <i>Non-Departmental Output Expenses:</i>                |                           |                |                |                |                                   |
| Primary Education                                       | 0.821                     | -              | -              | -              | -                                 |
| Secondary Education                                     |                           | -              | -              | -              | -                                 |
| <b>Total Operating</b>                                  | <b>0.821</b>              | -              | -              | -              | -                                 |

Approved / Not approved

☒ Approved ☐ Not approved

G. **Agree** that the expenses incurred under recommendation D above be charged against the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura* contingency previously established by the COVID-19 Ministerial Group be as follows:

| Contingency: Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura (\$m)                           | <b>2021/22</b> |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Opening balance</b> [CMG-21-MIN-0005]   | <b>21.600</b>  |
| Less   |                |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 21 September [METIS 1270900] | (3.850)        |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 5 October [METIS 1272148]    | (3.600)        |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 2 November [METIS 1273863]   | (4.700)        |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 16 November [METIS 1276429]  | (4.200)        |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 30 November [METIS 1277295]  | (3.600)        |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 20 December [this Report]    | (0.821)        |
| <b>Balance</b>   | <b>0.829</b>   |

Agree / Disagree

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree

- J. **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2021/22 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree** / Disagree

- K. **Agree** that this Report be released as part of the Government's proactive release of information relating to the COVID-19 response

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree** / Disagree

Hon Grant Robertson  
**Minister of Finance**

\_\_/\_\_/\_\_

  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

7/12/2021

  
Anna Welanyk  
**Hautū – Te Puna Ohumahi Mātauranga |**  
**Education Workforce**

03/12/2021



## Background

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1. On 19 August 2021, you agreed to the re-establishment of emergency payments for casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura [METIS 1269399 refers], following discovery of COVID-19 cases in the community and the resulting shift to Alert Level 4 at 11:59pm on 17 August.
2. Support has been provided to casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura as follows:
  - a. Approximately \$10.800 million was re-prioritised from non-departmental appropriations for primary, secondary and learning support to enable the Ministry to make these payments, which initially covered the period of 18 to 24 August.
  - b. On 24 August, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group agreed that this support should continue up to 7 September and provided a further \$10.800 million for this purpose. Funding was also held in the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency to provide for further emergency support for casual schooling workers, and you were jointly authorised to approve the drawdown of this funding [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]. On 8 September, emergency payments were made to eligible casual workers for the period 18 August to 7 September.
  - c. On 12 September, you agreed that a further \$3.850 million be provided for further support up to 21 September while Auckland remained at Alert Level 4 and the rest of country moved to Alert Level 2 [METIS 1270900 refers]. Emergency payments were made to casual Auckland staff for this period on 22 September.
  - d. On 28 September, you agreed that a further \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 5 October, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [METIS 1272148 refers].
  - e. On 2 November, you agreed that a further \$4.700 million be provided to fund further support up to 2 November, while parts of the Waikato and the Auckland regions were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [29 October METIS 1273863 refers].
  - f. On 10 November, you agreed that a further \$4.200 million be provided to fund further support up to 16 November, while parts of the Waikato and Northland regions, and the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3, and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [10 November METIS 1276429 refers].
  - g. On 24 November, you agreed that a further \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 30 November, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [24 November METIS 1277295 refers].
3. In total \$41.550 million in funding has been provided for the scheme.

### *Recent and upcoming changes to COVID-19 restrictions and Public Health settings*

3. On 29 November, the Government confirmed that the country will move to managing community cases of COVID-19 through the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December 2021. As we have previously noted, the Protection Framework introduces a 3-level 'traffic light' system divided into Green, Orange and Red levels. Schools and kura are open at all levels, with additional health measures in place at the Orange and Red levels.
4. As we have also previously noted, the Government has revised the Public Health measures required at Alert Level 3 and re-categorised restrictions into three steps. Senior students in Years 11, 12 and 13 can return to learning onsite at Step 1 of the Alert Level 3 setting. In turn, staff can return to teaching onsite where senior students are returning in Alert Level 3 regions.
5. Further revised education settings further to allow students in Years 1 to 10 in Alert Level 3 settings at the time of the announcement (Auckland and Waikato regions) to return to onsite learning at schools and kura from 17 November. For most students in Years 1 to 8, this will be in a part-time capacity, however Year 9 and 10 students are able to return to face-to-face learning full-time.
6. Further health guidance has clarified that day relievers can now work across more than one education site if they are fully vaccinated. Previously, these staff were advised to work with one school only to limit the number of additional people outside the individual's immediate household who they may come into close contact with.

### *Emergency support for casual schooling workers beyond 30 November*

7. On 10 November, you made the in-principle decision [METIS 1276429 refers] that automatic emergency financial support would cease when the COVID-19 Protection Framework replaces the Alert Levels structure.
8. Although the Government has now confirmed the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December, schools and kura in Auckland have been advised by the Secretary of Education that they will retain current public health measures that are in place at Alert Level 3, Step 2 for the remainder of the year. This message was shared in the 24 November Bulletin to School Leaders.
9. The demand for relief teachers in secondary schools and kura during Term 4 is normally significantly less than at other times throughout the schooling year, as senior secondary students are engaged on study leave. Therefore, we anticipate that secondary relief teachers' ability to engage in relief work is likely to be similar when compared to the same period in 2019 and 2020.
10. However, at primary schools and kura in Auckland, students are returning to face-to-face learning in a part-time capacity until the end of the schooling year on 20 December. We expect there are opportunities for relief teachers to engage in work, however we understand these work opportunities may still be limited.
11. Separately, we have heard from the unions that there appears to be a degree of caution amongst schools who are reluctant to engage relievers, particularly those staff who are working across several schools. We are advised that relievers in Alert Level 3 areas are continuing to report a significant drop in work even as schools begin to provide face-to-face learning for more students. Therefore, many day relief staff and casual workers, particularly those who normally work in primary schools continue to rely on emergency payments, as the resumption of teaching to all year levels continues to take time.

12. Accordingly, we recommend that automatic emergency payments are continued for eligible primary relief teachers and casual non-teaching workers in the Auckland region for the next full fortnightly pay period of restrictions, and part of the next pay period until the end of the school year, that is no later than 20 December 2021.
13. We expect costs for this limited continuation of the emergency payment in the Auckland region beyond 30 November, to be approximately \$4.380 million through to 20 December.
14. The amount of the payment made to each worker will continue to be offset by any casual work that is paid to a worker by a State or State-Integrated school or kura in this pay period.

#### *Support at Alert Level 2*

15. As we have previously advised, at Alert Levels 1 and 2, it is expected that relievers and non-teaching specialist and support staff who are fully vaccinated and would normally work across multiple schools and kura will be able to continue this usual pattern of work. To date, only two workers have applied for this support since the scheme was re-opened for the current resurgence.
16. As we have also previously advised, the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework will impact the way we assess and provide emergency support, as the current criteria is based on the Alert Level structure.
17. Therefore, we recommend that emergency payments on application are ceased for those casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2.

#### *Cessation of emergency financial support to casual schooling workers beyond 20 December*

18. The intention of the emergency payment scheme was to provide emergency income support to day relievers and casual non-teaching staff who are paid by timesheet and who would have had their usual income significantly disrupted because of the current COVID-19 resurgence and associated Public Health measures in place.
19. As we have previously noted, the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework will impact the way we assess and provide emergency financial support, as the current criteria for support is based on schools and kura being closed at Alert Levels 4 and 3. As this will no longer be case at a regional level widespread emergency support is not appropriate under the new COVID-19 Protection Framework settings.
20. Where ongoing financial support may be needed other forms of Government support are available to casual workers through Work and Income.

## Financial Implications

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19. Your agreement is sought to the provision of \$4.38 million in funding to extend the emergency payment scheme until 20 December 2021 for primary teachers and casual schooling employees in the Auckland region.
20. As \$41.550 million has been provided for the scheme, and actual costs to date have been \$37.991 million, a further \$0.821 million will be required in order to make the last payments from the scheme. We recommend this is provided from the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency set aside for this purpose.
21. To mitigate the risk of overpayments, the amount of the payment made to each casual worker will continue to be offset by any casual work that is paid to a worker by a State or State-Integrated school or kura in the pay period in which the emergency payment is made.

## Risks

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22. As we have previously advised, while these measures will continue to significantly reassure many vulnerable schooling workers in the affected regions, they will not fully mitigate the impact of COVID-19 for these employees and the amount of support provided to each individual will vary. This could create a perception of inequity between those who receive different support depending on their circumstances, or people who receive other COVID-19 assistance payments from Government.
23. Some contingent workers may also be eligible for other Government assistance depending on their circumstances. For example, they may work at a non-schooling sector part-time job as well as undertaking relief teaching work.
24. The emergency payment scheme provides direct income support to casual State and State-integrated schooling sector employees. This may be considered more beneficial than the support that has been provided to casual employees in other sectors where different funding and employment settings apply, e.g., employees in the early learning sector.
25. By nature, casual and relief teaching work is precarious and many of these staff may not normally expect to their patterns of work to remain constant during Term 4. For example, as secondary school students are engaged on study leave during Term 4, relief teachers in these settings do not reasonably expect the same amount of work as they may at other times during the school year. However, some secondary school relief teachers may be concerned that this support has ceased slightly ahead of the formal end of the school year, and ahead of support for day relievers working in primary settings.

## Consultation

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26. The Treasury have been consulted in the development of this Report.

## Next Steps

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27. Updated communications about the future of the emergency payment scheme will be made available via online channels and the Bulletin for School Leaders.
28. These communications will help provide confidence to casual workers and their whānau about the supports being put in place to minimise disruption to learning progress and look after the wellbeing of those people directly involved in delivering teaching and learning.

## Proactive Release

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29. We recommend that this paper is proactively released in line with the Government's commitment to the release of such information and advice.



## Education Report: Continuation of emergency payments for casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura, and the future of financial support for the casual schooling workforce

|   |  |                     |             |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>To:</b>                                    | Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance<br>Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education |                     |             |
| <b>Date:</b>                                  | 3 December 2021  | <b>Priority:</b>    | High        |
| <b>Security Level:</b>                        | In confidence  | <b>METIS No:</b>    | 1278040     |
| <b>Drafter:</b>                               | Isabella Sutherland  | <b>DDI:</b>         | 04 463 2887 |
| <b>Key Contact:</b>                           | Anna Welanyk   | <b>DDI:</b>         | 04 463 7745 |
| <b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b> | No   | <b>Round Robin:</b> | Yes         |

### Purpose of Report

- This paper seeks your approval to cease the provision of emergency financial support to casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura in Auckland following the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework. We recommend that:
  - For day relievers and casual non-teaching workers who are engaged mainly by secondary schools, emergency payments will cease with effect from 1 December.
  - For day relievers and casual non-teaching workers who are engaged mainly by primary schools, emergency payments will cease at the end of the current school term, ie 20 December.
- Your approval is sought to draw down \$0.821 million from the tagged contingency *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* to fund the last payments to be made under the scheme.

### Summary

- Due to the COVID-19 resurgence in late August 2021, the Emergency Payment Scheme was re-established for day relief staff and casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura who are paid by timesheet, and who would have their income *significantly* disrupted due to Public Health measures operating at COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3, namely schools and kura being closed for face-to-face learning for the majority of students.

4. The emergency payment scheme initially supported around 15,000 casual staff across the country while the whole of the country was at Alert Levels 3 and 4, and around 4,700 casual staff in Auckland and other regions when they were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2.
5. The scheme has played an important role in maintaining the temporary workforce in Auckland and other regions during the period they have been at Alert Level 3. Many day relief teachers receive significant proportion of their income from casual work and are reliant on this income, while the casual workforce is relied on by schools and kura to continue learning programmes during periods of sick or other leave. It has been important to both provide income support for this workforce and retain relief teachers for when schools return to more normal operations.
6. Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework (the Framework) broad regional closures of school sites are not expected and day relief teachers can be expected to return to close to normal patterns of employment, particularly in 2022 when the Framework is fully adopted. Accordingly, we recommend that the scheme is progressively closed as term 4, 2021 concludes.
7. In order to ensure the support provided remains targeted to need, while being fiscally manageable, we recommend that the scheme is closed in two phases:
  - 7.1. Support for day relief and casual workers in secondary schools within the Auckland boundary would cease from 1 December. This recognises that many secondary schools in Auckland are operating close to their normal patterns of relief teacher engagement for this point in the school year.
  - 7.2. We recommend payments continue for relief teachers and casual workers who are engaged by primary schools within the Auckland boundary until the conclusion of term 4 on 20 December. This because many primary schools are continuing to operate as if they are in Alert Level 3 for this period and primary school casual workers in Auckland are continuing to report a significant drop in work as usual patterns of face-to-face learning have not yet resumed.
8. To date, support has been provided to casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura as follows:
  - 8.1. Approximately \$10.800 million was re-prioritised from non-departmental appropriations for primary, secondary and learning support to enable the Ministry of Education to make these payments, which initially covered the period of 18 to 24 August.
  - 8.2. On 24 August, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group agreed that this support should continue up to 7 September and provided a further \$10.800 million for this purpose. On 8 September, emergency payments were made to eligible casual workers for the period 18 August to 7 September.
  - 8.3. Additional funding was also provided in the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency for further emergency support for casual schooling workers as required, and you were jointly authorised to approve the drawdown of this funding [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]. Subsequently, you have agreed to the following payments and associated draw down of funding:

- a further \$3.850 million up to 21 September while Auckland remained at Alert Level 4 and the rest of country moved to Alert Level 2 [12 September METIS 1270900 refers]. Emergency payments were made to casual Auckland staff for this period on 22 September.
- a total of \$3.600 million up to 5 October, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [28 September METIS 1272148 refers].
- a further \$4.700 million up to 2 November, while parts of the Waikato and the Auckland regions were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [29 October METIS 1273863 refers].
- a total of \$4.200 million up to 16 November, while parts of the Waikato and Northland regions, and the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3, and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [10 November METIS 1276429 refers].
- a total of \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 30 November, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [24 November METIS 1277295 refers]

9. In total \$41.550 million in funding has been provided for the scheme.

10. The support which has been provided is summarised below:

| Pay period          | Total workers receiving payment | Cost (\$million) | Average payment per worker |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 11/08 – 24/08/2021  | 13,898                          | 6.668            | \$480                      |
| 25/08 – 07/09/2021  | 16,658                          | 11.649           | \$699                      |
| 08/09 – 21/09/2021  | 7,938                           | 4.283            | \$540                      |
| 22/09 – 05/10/2021  | 3,891                           | 3.511            | \$902                      |
| 06/10 – 19/10/2021* | 781                             | 0.355            | \$455                      |
| 20/10 – 02/11/2021  | 4,710                           | 4.145            | \$880                      |
| 03/11 – 16/11/2021  | 4,598                           | 3.989            | \$868                      |
| 17/11 – 30/11/2021  | 3,785                           | 3.391            | \$745                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>-</b>                        | <b>37.991</b>    | <b>-</b>                   |

\* this pay period covered the term 3 to term 4 school holidays



*Recent and upcoming changes to COVID-19 restrictions and Public Health settings*

11. On 29 November, the Government confirmed that the country will move to managing community cases of COVID-19 through the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December 2021. As we have previously noted, the Protection Framework introduces a 3-level 'traffic light' system divided into Green, Orange and Red levels. Schools and kura are open at all levels, with additional health measures in place at the Orange and Red levels. Accordingly:

11.1. Senior students in Years 11, 12 and 13 have been able to return to learning onsite

11.2. Students in Years 1 to 10 in Alert Level 3 settings were able to return to onsite learning at schools and kura from 17 November. For most students in Years 1 to 8, this continues to be in a part-time capacity, however Year 9 and 10 students are able to return to face-to-face learning full-time.

12. On 10 November, you made the in-principle decision [METIS 1276429 refers] that automatic emergency financial support for the casual schooling workforce would cease when the COVID-19 Protection Framework replaced the Alert Levels structure.

*Emergency payments for the casual schooling workforce beyond 30 November*

13. The COVID-19 Protection Framework will come into effect from 3 December for most schools and kura, however, those in Auckland have been advised that they will retain current public health measures that are in place at Alert Level 3, Step 2 for the remainder of the year.

14. We anticipate that secondary relief teachers' and other casual workers ability to engage in work is likely to be similar when compared to the same period in the previous year. This is because:

14.1. Students in years 9 to 13 are able to return to onsite learning; and

14.2. the demand for relief teachers in secondary schools and kura during Term 4 would usually be less than at other times throughout the schooling year, as senior secondary students are engaged on study leave.

15. However, at primary schools and kura in Auckland, students are expected to return to face-to-face learning in only a part-time capacity until the end of the schooling year on 20 December. We expect there will be increased opportunities for relief teachers and casual workers to engage in work, however we have heard accounts from the sector and our union partners that work opportunities remain limited while the public health measures for Alert Level 3, Step 2 continue.

16. We expect costs for the continuation of the emergency payment in the Auckland region up to 20 December for primary school workers, to be approximately \$4.380 million. As \$41.550 million has been provided for the scheme, and actual costs to date have been \$37.991 million, further funding of \$0.821million will be required to make the last payments from the scheme. We recommend this is provided from the Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura tagged operating contingency established for this purpose.

17. If you agree to continue emergency payments as proposed and appropriate funding accordingly, the remaining balance of the Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura tagged operating contingency will be \$0.829 million.
18. Support will also cease for casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2, whose ability to gain employment has been directly affected by COVID-19, with effect from 1 December. Uptake of this support has been very low.

## Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

A. **Note** that on 24 August 2021, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]:

- i. Agreed to the provision of emergency support for casual workers who had worked on at least one occasion for a State or State-Integrated school or kura in the 90 days leading up to 17 August when the country moved to Alert Level 4, the extent of which will be heavily influenced by the period over which COVID-19 Alert Level 2, Alert Level 3, or Alert Level 4 restrictions remain in place
- ii. Set funding aside in a tagged operating contingency for this purpose, as below:

|  | \$m – increase/(decrease) |         |         |         |                   |
|--|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
|  | 2021/22                   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26& Outyears |
| Contingency: Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura | 21.6                      | -       | -       | -       | -                 |

- iii. Authorised you to jointly approve the drawdown of the tagged operating contingency

**Noted**

**Noted**

B. **Note** that on 24 November, you jointly [METIS 1277295 refers]:

- i. Agreed that emergency support was continued for the next payroll period (17 to 30 November) while the Auckland region remained at Alert Level 3
- ii. Noted that the scheme would be available on application at Alert Level 2 for the rest of the country
- iii. Approved changes to appropriations to provide up to \$3.600 million for these payments, with funding to be drawn down from the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency.
- iv. Noted that the Ministry would provide further advice about the future of the Emergency Payment Scheme beyond 30 November and how this would be funded, if the COVID-19 Protection Framework was not in place by 30 November

**Noted**

**Noted**

C. **Agree** that the provision of support under this scheme for casual workers will cease with effect from:

- i. For relief teachers and casual worker mainly employed in secondary education: the end of last full pay period before the COVID-19 Protection Framework is introduced (i.e., from 1 December)
- ii. For other relief teachers and casual non-teaching staff in the Auckland region: from the end of term 4, 2021 (ie no later than 20 December)

**Agree** Disagree

**Agree / Disagree**

D. **Note** that, if you agree to recommendation C support will be continued up to and including 20 December for relief teachers and casual non-teaching staff mainly employed in primary education in the Auckland region

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree / Disagree**

E. **Agree** that support on application for causal workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2, whose ability to gain employment has been directly affected by COVID-19 is ceased from 1 December

**Agree** Disagree

**Agree / Disagree**

F. **Approve** the following changes to appropriations with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

| Vote Education<br>Minister of Education                 | \$m - increase/(decrease) |         |         |         |                    |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
|   | 2021/22                   | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 & Outyears |
| <b>Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:</b> |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| <b>Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA</b>           |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| <i>Non-Departmental Output Expense:</i>                 |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| Learning Support and Alternative Education              |                           | -       | -       |         | -                  |
| <b>Primary and Secondary Education MCA</b>              |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| <i>Departmental Output Expense:</i>                     |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| Support and Resources for Education Providers           |                           | -       | -       | -       | -                  |
| (funded by Revenue Crown)                               |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| <i>Non-Departmental Output Expenses:</i>                |                           |         |         |         |                    |
| Primary Education                                       | 0.821                     | -       | -       | -       | -                  |
| Secondary Education                                     |                           | -       | -       | -       | -                  |
| <b>Total Operating</b>                                  | <b>0.821</b>              | -       | -       | -       | -                  |

**Approved / Not approved**

**Approved / Not approved**

G. **Agree** that the expenses incurred under recommendation D above be charged against the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura* contingency previously established by the COVID-19 Ministerial Group be as follows:

| Contingency: Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura (\$m)                           | 2021/22       |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Opening balance</b> [CMG-21-MIN-0005]   | <b>21.600</b> |
| Less   |               |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 21 September [METIS 1270900] | (3.850)       |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 5 October [METIS 1272148]    | (3.600)       |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 2 November [METIS 1273863]   | (4.700)       |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 16 November [METIS 1276429]  | (4.200)       |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 30 November [METIS 1277295]  | (3.600)       |
| • continuation of income support for the current Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2 restrictions up to 20 December [this Report]    | (0.821)       |
| <b>Balance</b>   | <b>0.829</b>  |

**Agree / Disagree**

**Agree / Disagree**

- J. **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2021/22 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply

**Agree** Disagree

Agree / Disagree

- K. **Agree** that this Report be released as part of the Government's proactive release of information relating to the COVID-19 response

Agree / Disagree

Agree / Disagree



Hon Grant Robertson  
**Minister of Finance**

Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

8 / 12 / 2021

  /  /  



Anna Welanyk  
**Hautū – Te Puna Ohumahi Mātauranga |**  
**Education Workforce**

03/12/2021

## Background

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1. On 19 August 2021, you agreed to the re-establishment of emergency payments for casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura [METIS 1269399 refers], following discovery of COVID-19 cases in the community and the resulting shift to Alert Level 4 at 11:59pm on 17 August.
2. Support has been provided to casual workers of State and State-Integrated schools and kura as follows:
  - a. Approximately \$10.800 million was re-prioritised from non-departmental appropriations for primary, secondary and learning support to enable the Ministry to make these payments, which initially covered the period of 18 to 24 August.
  - b. On 24 August, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group agreed that this support should continue up to 7 September and provided a further \$10.800 million for this purpose. Funding was also held in the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-Integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency to provide for further emergency support for casual schooling workers, and you were jointly authorised to approve the drawdown of this funding [CMG-21-MIN-0005 refers]. On 8 September, emergency payments were made to eligible casual workers for the period 18 August to 7 September.
  - c. On 12 September, you agreed that a further \$3.850 million be provided for further support up to 21 September while Auckland remained at Alert Level 4 and the rest of country moved to Alert Level 2 [METIS 1270900 refers]. Emergency payments were made to casual Auckland staff for this period on 22 September.
  - d. On 28 September, you agreed that a further \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 5 October, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [METIS 1272148 refers].
  - e. On 2 November, you agreed that a further \$4.700 million be provided to fund further support up to 2 November, while parts of the Waikato and the Auckland regions were at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [29 October METIS 1273863 refers].
  - f. On 10 November, you agreed that a further \$4.200 million be provided to fund further support up to 16 November, while parts of the Waikato and Northland regions, and the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3, and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [10 November METIS 1276429 refers].
  - g. On 24 November, you agreed that a further \$3.600 million be provided to fund further support up to 30 November, while the Auckland region was at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 [24 November METIS 1277295 refers].
3. In total \$41.550 million in funding has been provided for the scheme.

### *Recent and upcoming changes to COVID-19 restrictions and Public Health settings*

3. On 29 November, the Government confirmed that the country will move to managing community cases of COVID-19 through the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December 2021. As we have previously noted, the Protection Framework introduces a 3-level 'traffic light' system divided into Green, Orange and Red levels. Schools and kura are open at all levels, with additional health measures in place at the Orange and Red levels.
4. As we have also previously noted, the Government has revised the Public Health measures required at Alert Level 3 and re-categorised restrictions into three steps. Senior students in Years 11, 12 and 13 can return to learning onsite at Step 1 of the Alert Level 3 setting. In turn, staff can return to teaching onsite where senior students are returning in Alert Level 3 regions.
5. Further revised education settings further to allow students in Years 1 to 10 in Alert Level 3 settings at the time of the announcement (Auckland and Waikato regions) to return to onsite learning at schools and kura from 17 November. For most students in Years 1 to 8, this will be in a part-time capacity, however Year 9 and 10 students are able to return to face-to-face learning full-time.
6. Further health guidance has clarified that day relievers can now work across more than one education site if they are fully vaccinated. Previously, these staff were advised to work with one school only to limit the number of additional people outside the individual's immediate household who they may come into close contact with.

### *Emergency support for casual schooling workers beyond 30 November*

7. On 10 November, you made the in-principle decision [METIS 1276429 refers] that automatic emergency financial support would cease when the COVID-19 Protection Framework replaces the Alert Levels structure.
8. Although the Government has now confirmed the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework from 3 December, schools and kura in Auckland have been advised by the Secretary of Education that they will retain current public health measures that are in place at Alert Level 3, Step 2 for the remainder of the year. This message was shared in the 24 November Bulletin to School Leaders.
9. The demand for relief teachers in secondary schools and kura during Term 4 is normally significantly less than at other times throughout the schooling year, as senior secondary students are engaged on study leave. Therefore, we anticipate that secondary relief teachers' ability to engage in relief work is likely to be similar when compared to the same period in 2019 and 2020.
10. However, at primary schools and kura in Auckland, students are returning to face-to-face learning in a part-time capacity until the end of the schooling year on 20 December. We expect there are opportunities for relief teachers to engage in work, however we understand these work opportunities may still be limited.
11. Separately, we have heard from the unions that there appears to be a degree of caution amongst schools who are reluctant to engage relievers, particularly those staff who are working across several schools. We are advised that relievers in Alert Level 3 areas are continuing to report a significant drop in work even as schools begin to provide face-to-face learning for more students. Therefore, many day relief staff and casual workers, particularly those who normally work in primary schools continue to rely on emergency payments, as the resumption of teaching to all year levels continues to take time.

12. Accordingly, we recommend that automatic emergency payments are continued for eligible primary relief teachers and casual non-teaching workers in the Auckland region for the next full fortnightly pay period of restrictions, and part of the next pay period until the end of the school year, that is no later than 20 December 2021.
13. We expect costs for this limited continuation of the emergency payment in the Auckland region beyond 30 November, to be approximately \$4.380 million through to 20 December.
14. The amount of the payment made to each worker will continue to be offset by any casual work that is paid to a worker by a State or State-Integrated school or kura in this pay period.

#### *Support at Alert Level 2*

15. As we have previously advised, at Alert Levels 1 and 2, it is expected that relievers and non-teaching specialist and support staff who are fully vaccinated and would normally work across multiple schools and kura will be able to continue this usual pattern of work. To date, only two workers have applied for this support since the scheme was re-opened for the current resurgence.
16. As we have also previously advised, the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework will impact the way we assess and provide emergency support, as the current criteria is based on the Alert Level structure.
17. Therefore, we recommend that emergency payments on application are ceased for those casual workers in State and State-Integrated schools and kura at Alert Level 2.

#### *Cessation of emergency financial support to casual schooling workers beyond 20 December*

18. The intention of the emergency payment scheme was to provide emergency income support to day relievers and casual non-teaching staff who are paid by timesheet and who would have had their usual income significantly disrupted because of the current COVID-19 resurgence and associated Public Health measures in place.
19. As we have previously noted, the introduction of the COVID-19 Protection Framework will impact the way we assess and provide emergency financial support, as the current criteria for support is based on schools and kura being closed at Alert Levels 4 and 3. As this will no longer be case at a regional level widespread emergency support is not appropriate under the new COVID-19 Protection Framework settings.
20. Where ongoing financial support may be needed other forms of Government support are available to casual workers through Work and Income.



## Financial Implications

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19. Your agreement is sought to the provision of \$4.38 million in funding to extend the emergency payment scheme until 20 December 2021 for primary teachers and casual schooling employees in the Auckland region.
20. As \$41.550 million has been provided for the scheme, and actual costs to date have been \$37.991 million, a further \$0.821 million will be required in order to make the last payments from the scheme. We recommend this is provided from the *Emergency Support for Casual Workers in State and State-integrated Schools and Kura* tagged operating contingency set aside for this purpose.
21. To mitigate the risk of overpayments, the amount of the payment made to each casual worker will continue to be offset by any casual work that is paid to a worker by a State or State-Integrated school or kura in the pay period in which the emergency payment is made.

## Risks

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22. As we have previously advised, while these measures will continue to significantly reassure many vulnerable schooling workers in the affected regions, they will not fully mitigate the impact of COVID-19 for these employees and the amount of support provided to each individual will vary. This could create a perception of inequity between those who receive different support depending on their circumstances, or people who receive other COVID-19 assistance payments from Government.
23. Some contingent workers may also be eligible for other Government assistance depending on their circumstances. For example, they may work at a non-schooling sector part-time job as well as undertaking relief teaching work.
24. The emergency payment scheme provides direct income support to casual State and State-integrated schooling sector employees. This may be considered more beneficial than the support that has been provided to casual employees in other sectors where different funding and employment settings apply, e.g., employees in the early learning sector.
25. By nature, casual and relief teaching work is precarious and many of these staff may not normally expect to their patterns of work to remain constant during Term 4. For example, as secondary school students are engaged on study leave during Term 4, relief teachers in these settings do not reasonably expect the same amount of work as they may at other times during the school year. However, some secondary school relief teachers may be concerned that this support has ceased slightly ahead of the formal end of the school year, and ahead of support for day relievers working in primary settings.

## Consultation

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26. The Treasury have been consulted in the development of this Report.

## Next Steps

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27. Updated communications about the future of the emergency payment scheme will be made available via online channels and the Bulletin for School Leaders.
28. These communications will help provide confidence to casual workers and their whānau about the supports being put in place to minimise disruption to learning progress and look after the wellbeing of those people directly involved in delivering teaching and learning.

## Proactive Release

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29. We recommend that this paper is proactively released in line with the Government's commitment to the release of such information and advice.