



Briefing Note: Talking Points for SWC Item – Continuing Ka Ora, Ka Ako

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Security	Budget sensitive	Date:	12 March 2021
Priority:	Medium	METIS No:	1251785
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Purpose

- On Wednesday 17 March, the Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC) is considering your Cabinet paper *Continuing the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches Programme* [METIS 1244486].
- This briefing note provides talking points about the content in the Cabinet paper to support you during the meeting.

Proactive Release

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.

Agree / Disagree



Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

15/03/2021

Summary of agency feedback

- Agency feedback was sought from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry of Health, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry of Youth Development and Ministry of Social Development.
- Overall, the feedback we received on the Cabinet paper was supportive of the initiative and 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- We anticipate you may receive a question about the inclusion of secondary schools, as earlier versions of the paper were less explicit on the timing of their inclusion and their position moving forward. We have made sure to amply cover off these details in both the Cabinet paper (at paragraphs 41-42 and recommendation 9) and your speaking points below.
- You may also receive a question about the number and/or cost of departmental staffing for the programme. Given its size and profile, the programme depends heavily on the quality of relationships between regional staff, schools, communities and suppliers and the flow of information to and from the central team in Wellington. There is also a need for specialist roles to manage and advise on, for example, contract management, procurement and nutrition. The cost of departmental staffing makes up less than 2 per cent of the overall operating cost.
- In the Cabinet paper we have referred to funded year levels - Years 1 to 15. This can be confusing for those unaware of how the Ministry funds schools and students. Schools have classes up to Year 13, but the Ministry continues to fund students who remain at school for 14 or 15 years.

Talking Points

Background

- In April 2019 we agreed to fund a prototype of a healthy school lunch programme for up to 21,000 children and young people in three regions.
- I was invited to report back on the implementation of the prototype, now known as *Ka Ora, Ka Ako*, by the end of 2020
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduced sitting schedule for this committee after the 2020 General Election mean I'm here to do this today.
- As well as the prototype, I am also going to update you on the implementation of the expanded *Ka Ora, Ka Ako* programme which was announced as part of our COVID-19 Response at Budget 2020
- I am seeking your agreement today to continue the expanded programme for two more calendar years - 2022 & 2023, to be funded from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF) at a total cost of \$529.018 million.

Report back on implementation

- The first lunches of the prototype were served in Term 1 last year in selected schools and kura in Tairāwhiti | Hawke's Bay and Waiariki | Bay of Plenty.
- In Term 2, the prototype extended south to Otago | Southland.
- The prototype was designed to test our approach and how we design a wider programme and to understand some of the long-term outcomes of a school lunch programme.
- We targeted the prototype at children in Years 1 to 8 in selected schools with high-concentrations of socioeconomic disadvantage. Secondary-aged students in those schools were also included in the prototype to make sure the approach was universal and inclusive.
- In June last year, as part of our COVID-19 Response and Recovery package in Budget 2020, the programme was expanded to an additional 190,000 children and young people across the country, including to secondary schools and kura.
- The purpose of the expansion was to cushion the blow of the pandemic's socioeconomic impacts and to support our recovery as a nation.
- Implementing an expansion of this size is not without its challenges.
- Notwithstanding this, by the end of Term 2 this year, we will be providing more than 200,000 lunches each day.
- Throughout the implementation officials have been constantly learning and refining their approaches around things like costings, barriers to delivery, success factors and what we need to do to successfully implement a programme like this.

- Some of their key findings are outlined in Annex 1 to the Cabinet paper.
- An evaluation of the outcomes achieved by the prototype is due mid-year. The closure of schools nationwide under the Alert Level 4 lockdown has impacted the timeframe.
- In addition to the obvious benefits of providing a daily healthy lunch to more than 200,000 young people, around 2,000 jobs will be created from the expanded programme.
- As a local example, BayCatering in Tauranga is providing 3,800 lunches every day in nine schools in Tauranga and Whakatāne.
- They have now employed 17 *new* staff – many of whom had lost paid employment due the impacts of COVID-19.
- This shows how the Ka Ora, Ka Ako can support our recovery from the pandemic and is just one example of the wellbeing benefits to local communities beyond the direct impacts of young people receiving a healthy lunch each day.

Proposal to continue the programme

- Given its success, I am proposing we continue Ka Ora, Ka Ako until the end of the 2023 school year and fund this from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.
- Ka Ora, Ka Ako supports our vision to create a fair and equitable Aotearoa and our priority to lay the foundations for the future.
- Our commitment to the programme is stated in our 2020 Manifesto Commitment and the Speech from the Throne.
- We know that food insecurity persists across Aotearoa and that the pandemic has worsened the situation for many families.
- Continuing the programme will make sure our children and young people have what they need while we simultaneously provide much needed economic benefits and opportunities in local communities - it's a win-win.
- I propose that we maintain eligibility at 25 per cent of children and young people nationwide in schools with the highest concentrations of socioeconomic disadvantage.
- I also want to continue to include secondary schools, which were added to the programme through the expansion.
- In saying that, I know we haven't had the same opportunity to evaluate the impacts of the programme in secondary schools in the same way that we have in primary schools.
- 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

- By December next year I will return to update you again on the programme, deliver the results of the outcomes evaluation and the review of the eligibility approach.

- 9(2)(f)(iv)