

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

<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Cc:</b>	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	13 May 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1258707
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	No	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of paper

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

- a data quality issue affecting the reporting on the primary category of need
- analysis of the distribution of funding to date.

**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 in learning and wellbeing following the COVID-19 lockdowns. Over \$44.0 million of URF funding has been distributed to date.

  
Katrina Casey  
Deputy Secretary  
Sector Enablement & Support

13/5/2021



Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

24/5/2021

I'd like the next update to focus more on outcomes please. How has attendance, wellbeing and engagement improved as a result of this spending? Thanks, CH

## Background

1. The Urgent Response Fund (URF) provides \$50 million in 2020/21 to support children and young people's attendance, re-engagement in learning and wellbeing after the COVID-19 lockdowns.
2. We have used the Equity Index (EQI) to allocate the URF funding to regions<sup>1</sup>. The regional Directors of Education approve applications, working with regional advisory groups, to ensure that local knowledge and priorities inform funding decisions.
3. This update follows previous monthly reports since September 2020<sup>2</sup> and fortnightly updates in the Education Weekly Update (EWU).

## Data quality issue with primary category of need

4. Data quality checks have identified some applications that have not previously been included in reporting of primary category of need in the URF dashboard provided in our monthly URF reports. This was caused by a formatting issue affecting some data entered in this field. It affects reporting on this field since December 2020.
5. This issue only affects analysis in the monthly URF dashboard where the four categories of need are reflected as percentages totalling 100% (using a pie chart). It does not affect any other URF metrics, there is no impact on funding, processing of applications nor payments to institutions.
6. The issue was identified as part of the quality assurance for a recent written Parliamentary Question (WPQ 2021-14476). The response to this WPQ, which used % and value, provided the correct analysis. We have checked all 31 WPQs on the URF this year as well as responses to requests under the Official Information Act and media queries and found no errors as a result of this issue. ✓
7. The applications not included in previous reporting of primary category of need in the monthly reporting value \$5.9 million (at 31 March 2021). This impacts the proportions of applications in each need category as shown in the table below.

URF primary category of need as at 31 March 2021	Proportion of approved applications		Proportion of approved funding	
	Previously reported	Updated	Previously reported	Updated
Attendance	20%	17%	24%	21%
Wellbeing to support attendance	32%	42%	29%	39%
Cultural wellbeing to support attendance	9%	8%	12%	11%
Re-engagement in learning	39%	33%	34%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

<sup>1</sup> The Equity Index weights funding to regions with relatively higher levels of disadvantage, where the impact of COVID-19 on wellbeing, attendance, and engagement will be most significant.

<sup>2</sup> METIS 1239151, 1242528, 1244130, 1245690, 1249648, 1251861, and 1255294 refer. No report was provided in January 2021.



8. The biggest shift is in the wellbeing to support attendance category, where inclusion of the new data increases the percentage from 32% to 42% of applications approved, and from 29% to 39% of funding allocated at 31 March. Analysis of data at 28 April including all approved applications is included in the next section.

## Distribution of URF funding to 28 April 2021

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### ***Key URF metrics to 28 April 2021***

9. Annex 1 provides a national summary of the distribution of URF funding to 28 April 2021. To date, we have approved 4,551 applications to the URF totalling \$44.0 million<sup>3</sup>. The total number of applications submitted as at 28 April 2021 was 6,976.
10. Since 31 March 2021, we have approved 407 applications valued at \$3.8 million. Together these 407 applications support 24,888 ākonga. In the previous period<sup>4</sup>, 481 applications valued at \$5.0 million were approved.
11. At 28 April 2021, 12% of the funding allocated has been allocated to early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo. This has not changed from the proportion reported at 31 March 2021.
12. The URF has supported a high proportion of Auckland schools and kura, with 83% of eligible schools and kura<sup>5</sup> in Auckland having received URF funding compared with 73% nationally. The Auckland region has allocated 88% of its funds, which is in line with national figures.
13. Through April we have seen a reduction in the number of new URF applications being submitted. Schools, kura and early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo submitted 440 new URF applications since 31 March, compared with 807 in the previous period. This reduction is expected as we approach the end of the fund and regional offices implement local deadlines for submission. Auckland, for example, stopped taking new applications after 16 April.
14. Directors of Education are working with their regional advisory groups to closely manage their URF pipelines and process all outstanding applications. The total number of applications remaining under consideration has reduced from 874 at 31 March to 352 at 28 April. At 28 April, 65% of the 6,976 applications submitted had been approved.

### ***Approved funding by primary category of need***

15. Annex 1 provides the proportion of approved funding by primary category of need since 4 August 2020, including the additional \$5.9 million of applications not previously included in the analysis of this field. Based on the updated analysis:
  - a. Support for needs related to Wellbeing to support attendance has consistently made up the largest proportion of the value of approved URF applications, though this has declined over time.
  - b. Support for needs related to cultural wellbeing to support attendance has increased steadily since August 2020 and made up 12% of the value of approved applications at 28 April 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> Applications made before the online process (4 August 2020) are not included in these figures. These account for \$205,191. No monitoring data is available for this funding.

<sup>4</sup> The previous period is 24 February to 31 March 2021 [METIS 1255294 refers] which is five weeks, compared to the usual four.

<sup>5</sup> Eligible schools and kura includes state schools, state integrated schools, ngā kura Kaupapa Māori, ngā Kura a Iwi and specialist schools.

- C. Support for needs related to re-engagement in learning has also increased and made up 29% of the value of approved applications at 28 April 2021.

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

16. Each month, we analyse the profile of the schools and kura with approved URF applications. This is shown in Annex 1. Profile data is used to support local decision making and identify opportunities for directing the URF to areas of greatest need.
17. Overall, low decile schools and kura, and their ākonga, are well represented in the proportion of URF funding received. We have analysed data on the low decile schools and kura that have not yet accessed support through the URF, including 92 decile 1 schools, and sought insights from Directors of Education. A number are specialist schools or Teen Parent Units and have accessed other funding, such as the At Risk COVID-19 fund. Other low decile schools and kura have accessed URF support through a cluster application, and therefore have not made an application themselves. Regional staff have been engaging with low decile schools and kura to ensure that, where need exists, they are supported to make an application.
18. Nationally, the percentage of Māori learners in schools and kura with approved URF applications is the same as the percentage of Māori learners in all eligible schools and kura (24%). While the percentage of Māori learners in schools and kura with approved URF applications has slowly but steadily increased over the life of the fund, based on the targeting approach taken we would expect it to be higher than the percentage of Māori learners in all eligible schools and kura. This is, however, a relatively blunt measure. We will be undertaking further work to understand the impact of the URF on Māori learners, including as part of follow-up with funded institutions.
19. The percentage of Pacific learners in schools and kura with approved URF applications is slightly higher than the percentage of Pacific learners in all eligible schools and kura.
20. As regional decisions are made on the allocation of the remainder of the fund, Directors of Education have confirmed that responding to needs in low decile schools and kura, and those with high proportions of Māori learners, remains the priority.

### ***Early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo in receipt of URF funding***

21. In Annex 1 we have included an analysis of the profile of early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo with approved URF applications.
22. Nationally, the percentage of both Māori and Pacific learners in early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo that have approved URF applications are higher than the percentage of Māori and Pacific learners in all eligible early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo.
23. Early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo with an EQI rating of 1 - 4 are receiving a higher proportion of URF funding than those with an EQI rating of 5+<sup>6</sup>. To date, 55% of the funding to the early learning sector has gone to organisations with an EQI rating of 1 - 4, while only 31% of learners are enrolled in these services.
24. Maintaining a focus on early learning services me ngā kōhanga reo with high proportions of priority learners and low EQI ratings will continue to be a priority through the allocation of the remainder of the URF.

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<sup>6</sup> The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Service EQI measure the extent to which an ECE service draws its children from low socio-economic communities (using five socio-economic factors). It is calculated on the basis of child address data gathered through a family survey and is matched to Census data. ECE Services (including kōhanga reo) with an EQI between 1 and 4 are eligible for Equity Funding.



## Next steps

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25. We will continue to update you fortnightly in the EWU on key metrics for the URF, and monthly through these Briefing Notes for the remainder of the fund.

## Proactive Release

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26. 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 2020 to 28 April 2021)

# COVID-19 URGENT RESPONSE FUND – National summary of URF allocation (4 August 2020 to 28 April 2021)

We have approved 4,551 applications to the URF totalling \$44.0m. These applications support 461,472 learners, more than 186,000 of whom are in Auckland.

## Early learning services me ngā kohanga reo

- 45,142 learners supported across 776 services
- 860 approved applications, valued at \$5.2m
- Average funding of \$116 per learner

## Schools and kura

- 416,330 learners supported across 1,781 schools and kura
- 3,691 approved applications valued at \$38.8m
- Average funding of \$93 per learner

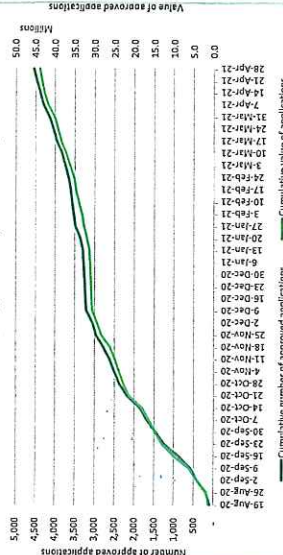
At 28 April, 65% of the 6,976 submitted applications have been approved.

## Pipeline of URF applications



Both the number and total value of approved applications are steadily increasing.

## URF weekly approvals (cumulative)

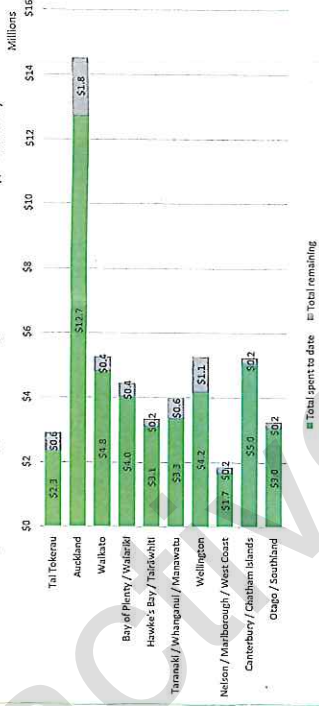


Of the 795 eligible decile 1-3 schools and kura across New Zealand, 27% (215) have not received URF funding. This is 20 fewer than at 31 March. Note: A small number of schools with URF funding do not have decile information and are therefore not included in the chart.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Total eligible schools and kura in region	297	255	243	238	245	244	233	229	234	244	2,444
Eligible schools and kura without URF funding	92	68	55	42	73	53	78	71	66	69	669
Percentage of eligible schools and kura without URF funding	31%	27%	23%	18%	30%	23%	33%	31%	28%	27%	27%

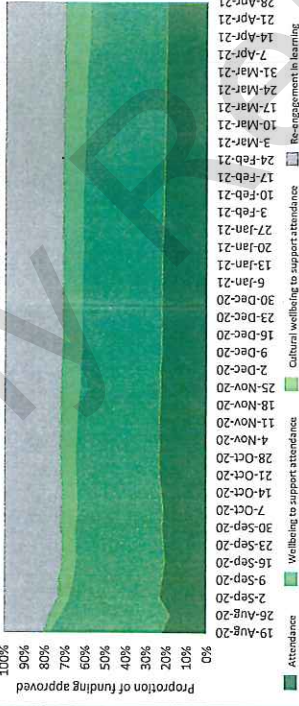
Nationally, 88% of the URF has been allocated. The proportion of unallocated funds remaining in each region varies from 3% to 20%. Note: These figures include \$205,191 allocated 1 July to 4 August 2020. No monitoring data is available for this funding.

## Proportion of regional funding allocated to date (\$ Million)



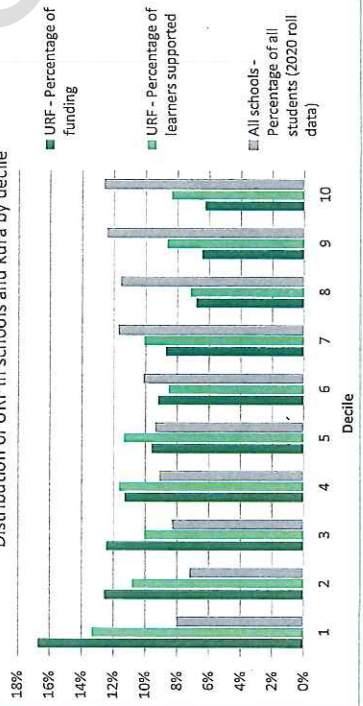
Support for needs related to wellbeing to support attendance has made up the largest proportion of the value of approved URF applications.

## Proportion of amount approved by category of need (cumulative)



Nationally, 42% of the URF funding approved for schools and kura has been for deciles 1-3. Decile 1-3 schools and kura account for 23% of all students.

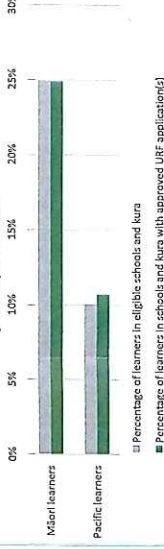
## Distribution of URF in schools and kura by decile



Analysis of the profile of schools, kura, early learning services me ngā kohanga reo with approved URF applications supports local decision making and engagement.

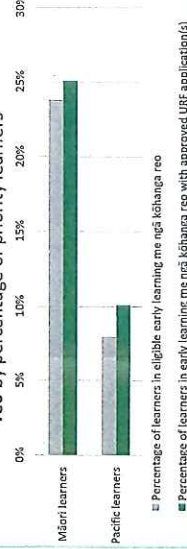
The percentage of Māori learners in schools and kura with URF funding is approximately equal to the percentage of Māori learners in all eligible schools.

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



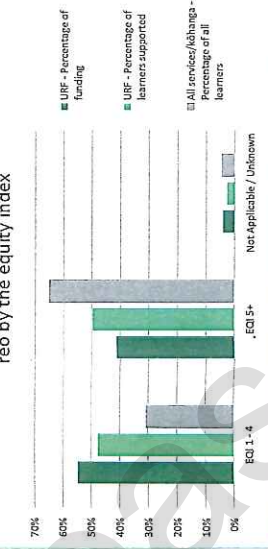
The percentage of Māori and Pacific learners in early learning services me ngā kohanga reo with URF funding is higher than the percentage in all eligible services.

Distribution of URF in early learning services me ngā kohanga reo by percentage of priority learners



Nationally, 55% of the URF funding approved for early learning services me ngā kohanga reo has been for those with an equity index rating of 1-4. These services account for 31% of all learners.

Distribution of URF in early learning services me ngā kohanga reo by the equity index



Notes: Numbers of learners are based on data provided in each application. Some education institutions have made multiple applications and that where this occurs, the same learners may be supported. Cluster applications are attributed to the main applicant. Applications made before the online process (4 August 2020) are not included unless stated. These account for \$205,191. No monitoring data is available for this funding. School rolls data is from July 2020 roll returns. Early learning rolls data is from ELI, the Early Learning Information System, from September 2020. The EQ (EQCC equity index) measures the extent to which an ECC service draws its children from low socio-economic communities (using socio-economic factors) and is calculated on the basis of child address data gathered through a family survey and is matched to Census data.