

Cabinet Paper material

Proactive release

Minister & portfolio Hon Chris Hipkins and Hon Jan Tinetti, Education and Associate Education
Name of package Re-engaging Akonga in Education Post COVID-19 Delta Lockdown
Date considered 18 October 2021
Date of release 24 November 2021

These documents have been proactively released:

Cabinet paper: Re-engaging Akonga in Education Post COVID-19 Delta Lockdown

Date considered: 18 October 2021

Minister of Education, Associate Minister of Education

Cabinet Minute: CAB-21-MIN-0416

Date considered: 18 October 2021

Author: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Minute: CBC-21-MIN-0115

Date considered: 6 October 2021

Author: Cabinet Office

Associated papers released:

1273264 Briefing Note: Re-engaging Akonga in Education post-COVID-19 Delta – Revised cabinet paper

1 October 2021

Ministry of Education

1274797 Education Report: Revised Package of Investments to Re-engage Students in Auckland

22 October 2021

Ministry of Education

Material redacted

Some deletions have been made from the documents in line with withholding grounds under the Official Information Act 1982. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

The applicable withholding grounds under the Act are as follows:

Section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.

You can read the Official Information Act 1982 here:

<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1982/0156/latest/DLM64785.html>

Proactively Released

Office of the Minister of Education

Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Chair, Cabinet Business Committee

Re-Engaging Akonga in Education Post COVID-19 Delta Lockdown

Proposal

1. This paper seeks agreement to delegate authority to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, in consultation with the Associate Minister of Education (Hon Jan Tinetti), to jointly make fiscally neutral adjustments within 2021/22 non-departmental appropriations in Vote Education of up to \$15 million to support a range of measures to re-engage learners in education following the recent COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland.

Relationship to Government Priorities

2. This Government is committed to supporting a world-class public education system, with a key focus on reducing barriers to education for all learners. We are also committed to protecting New Zealanders from the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background: COVID-19 has disrupted attendance and engagement in education

3. There is substantial evidence that regular school attendance and engagement supports positive life-long outcomes for learners. We are concerned that enforced absences from education services arising from COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland will have a significant and ongoing impact on attendance and engagement. By early October, most Auckland students will have spent upwards of seven weeks away from their physical learning environments.
4. We know that some learners will have struggled to remain engaged and motivated in education over this period, despite the best efforts of education services. Evidence from previous lockdowns indicates this impact will be felt most strongly by Māori and Pacific young people and learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds. There is substantial risk that young people will become disconnected from our education system, with long-lasting impacts.

We seek to respond urgently and flexibly to re-engage learners

5. We need to support learners to re-engage with education services. Our experience from previous lockdowns shows that this support needs to be available at the right time in the right places and be provided by the right people.

6. We will need to work with early learning services and schools and with families and communities to address engagement. We will need flexible approaches that reflect and respond to the dynamics, aspirations and concerns of learners and their families. This support will need to be targeted to the learners and families with the greatest needs and connect with other social services being provided to learners and their families.
7. This support will need to be available when physical education provision resumes for all learners, that is, when Auckland transitions from Level 3 to Level 2. Currently, we are planning to align this timing with the start of Term 4 on 18 October 2021. We want to start work as soon as possible with education services and communities to ensure they are ready to support learners and families.

Delegating authority to Ministers to enable timely and flexible support

8. The Ministry of Education has commenced work to identify potential savings to support this approach.
9. We now seek Cabinet agreement to delegate authority to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, in consultation with the Associate Minister of Education (Hon Jan Tinetti) to jointly approve fiscally neutral adjustments of non-departmental appropriations within Vote Education to support a range of measures to re-engage learners in education.
10. We propose to make fiscally neutral adjustments of up to \$15 million in non-departmental baselines for 2021/22, although we anticipate re-engagement efforts will be focussed on Term 4 of 2021.
11. This approach will ensure that support can be deployed quickly and flexibly to meet needs identified by education services and communities.
12. The Ministry of Education will use appropriate tools to manage and account for this expenditure. It will prepare regular financial and implementation reporting for joint Ministers.

Financial Implications

13. The Ministry of Education will reprioritise up to \$15 million from within its existing non-departmental baselines for 2021/22. It will identify the implications of this reprioritisation for consideration by joint Ministers.

Legislative, Climate, Human Rights and Population Implications

14. There are no legislative implications arising from this paper. This paper does not propose regulatory changes and has no climate or Human Rights implications.
15. This paper will support improved outcomes for Māori and Pacific learners by supporting them to re-engage with education services.

Consultation

16. The Ministry of Education prepared this paper. It has consulted with the Treasury and informed the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Te Puni Kōiri, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Ministry for Social Development about this paper.

Publicity

17. We intend to make an announcement about this approach prior to the resumption of physical education provision for all learners in Auckland.

Proactive Release

18. Pending agreement to the proposals, we intend to proactively release this paper at the appropriate time (that is, following further work to reprioritise and deploy funding).

Recommendations

19. The Minister of Education and the Associate Minister of Education recommend that the Cabinet Business Committee:
- a. **note** that enforced absences from education services arising from COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland will have a significant and ongoing impact on attendance and engagement;
 - b. **authorise** the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, in consultation with the Associate Minister of Education (Hon Jan Tinetti) to approve fiscally neutral adjustments of up to \$15 million from 2021/22 non-departmental appropriations within Vote Education to support work to re-engage learners in education following the current Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland;
 - c. **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 increases be met from Imprest Supply;
 - d. **note** that the Ministry of Education will prepare regular financial and implementation reporting for joint Ministers.

Authorised for lodging by

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

_____/_____/_____

Hon Jan Tinetti

Associate Minister of Education

_____/_____/_____



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report of the Cabinet Business Committee: Period Ended 8 October 2021

On 18 October 2021, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Business Committee for the period ended 8 October 2021:

Out of scope

CBC-21-MIN-0115 **Re-Engaging Akonga in Education Post COVID-19 Delta Lockdown** CONFIRMED
Portfolios: Education / Associate Education
(Hon Jan Tinetti)

Out of scope

Out of scope

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released



Cabinet Business Committee

Minute of Decision

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Re-Engaging Akonga in Education Post COVID-19 Delta Lockdown

Portfolios Education / Associate Education (Hon Jan Tinetti)

On 6 October 2021, the Cabinet Business Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-21-MIN-0408]:

- 1 **noted** that enforced absences from education services arising from COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland will have a significant and ongoing impact on attendance and engagement;
- 2 **authorised** the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, in consultation with the Associate Minister of Education (Hon Jan Tinetti), to approve fiscally neutral adjustments of up to \$15 million from 2021/22 non-departmental appropriations within Vote Education to support work to re-engage learners in education following the current Alert Levels 4 and 3 in Auckland;
- 3 **agreed** that the changes to appropriations for 2021/22 above be included in the 2021/22 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;
- 4 **noted** that the Ministry of Education will prepare regular financial and implementation reporting for the responsible Ministers.

Jenny Vickers
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Kris Faafoi
Hon Jan Tinetti
Hon Dr David Clark

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet