

## Cabinet Paper material

### Proactive release

Minister & portfolio	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education
Name of package	Extending Eligibility of the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award to the Realm Nations of Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau
Date considered	31 October 2022
Date of release	12 January 2023

#### These documents have been proactively released:

**Cabinet Minute: CAB-22-MIN-0469**

Date considered: 31 October 2022

Author: Cabinet Office

**Cabinet Minute: SWC-22-MIN-0187**

Date considered: 26 October 2022

Author: Cabinet Office

**Cabinet Paper: Extending Eligibility of the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award to the Realm Nations of Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau**

Date Considered: 31 October 2022

Author: Associate Minister of Education

#### Material redacted

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>



# 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 Social Wellbeing Committee: Period Ended 28 October 2022

On 31 October 2022, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee for the period ended 28 October 2022:

Out of scope	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Out of scope	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Out of scope	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
SWC-22-MIN-0187	<b>Extending Eligibility of the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award to the Realm Nations</b> Portfolio: Associate Education (School Operations)	CONFIRMED
Out of scope	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Out of scope

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rachel Hayward  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released

## In Confidence

Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Cabinet of Social Wellbeing Committee

## Extending Eligibility of the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award to the Realm Nations of Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau

### Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to extend eligibility for the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award (the Award) to the Realm Nations of the Cook Islands, Niue, and the dependant territory of Tokelau.

### Relation to government priorities

- 2 Extending eligibility of the Award to the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau aligns with the Award's intention to raise the status of vocational education and work towards gaining parity of esteem with university education.
- 3 This is an operational adjustment that requires Cabinet approval to explicitly include the Realm Nations in the Award's scope of eligibility.

### Background

- 4 The Award is an annual award that recognizes the top vocational student in every state and state-integrated secondary school and wharekura in the country. The winner receives a \$2000 cash prize, along with a certificate and letter of congratulations. Students are nominated by their schools, who submit the required nomination materials to the Ministry for approval.
- 5 The Award has been running for three years, with the upcoming 2022 iteration being the fourth consecutive year of operation.
- 6 In 2021, a query was received from a representative of Enuamanu School in the Cook Islands regarding the eligibility of schools in the Cook Islands to nominate students for the Award. It was indicated to them at this time that they were not eligible for the Award.
- 7 The current parameters of the Award, agreed to by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee in 2019 [SWC-19-MIN-0083], include New Zealand schools and do not explicitly extend eligibility to schools in the Realm Nations.
- 8 Realm Nation secondary schools are eligible for New Zealand Scholarship, and students in these countries are citizens of New Zealand.
- 9 I propose that the Realm Nations be made eligible to nominate students to receive the Award.

## Analysis

### The Cook Islands

- 10 The Cook Islands deliver NCEA and offer several different vocational programmes of learning that closely align with what is offered in New Zealand.
- 11 The Cook Islands Tertiary and Training Institute is the primary supplier of vocational programmes of learning in the country and supplies many of the same types of vocational programmes that are offered in New Zealand, including certificates in construction, engineering, and hospitality. Cultural and community specific vocational programmes including weaving and dress making are also offered.
- 12 Through consultation with representatives from Cook Islands schools and the Cook Islands Ministry of Education, it was indicated that the Award would be positively received by the communities and would positively affect the schools' efforts to promote the Vocational Pathways as viable pathways for students in school.
- 13 The type of vocational education offered in schools varies across the country depending on the community the school lies within. It was indicated that these different types of vocational education should be accepted as falling within the scope of vocational excellence should the Award be offered in the Cook Islands.
- 14 Certain schools in the Cook Islands that assess NCEA only go up to Year 11 (NCEA Level 1), at which point the students progress onto another school to complete further years/levels. Some schools with this structure offer vocational education that would be in line with the criteria of the Award, and nominations will be accepted from them despite not meeting the New Zealand criteria of Year 12-13.
- 15 We will extend eligibility for the Award to Year 11 students to accommodate for these cases. In New Zealand, Year 11 students have received the Award in instances where no Year 12 or 13 is present or suitable. Extending eligibility to Year 11 students in the Cook Islands would be consistent with this approach in New Zealand.

### Niue

- 16 Niue delivers NCEA and offers vocational programmes of learning at the sole secondary school in the country.
- 17 Niue High School offers Skills programmes at Year 12 and 13. These programmes align with the vocational education definition the Award is predicated on.
- 18 The development of more robust vocational programmes and accrediting local skills programmes is a goal of the school. It was indicated that the Award would be positively received and would have a positive impact in achieving the local goals of validating the Vocational Pathways as a viable alternative to the university pathway.
- 19 The university pathway is perceived as the most fruitful in the Niue community, and the Award being offered will contribute to raising the esteem of vocational education.

## **Tokelau**

- 20 It is desired that eligibility for the Award is extended to Tokelau contingent upon their full adoption of NCEA. Tokelau is in the process of doing this, and it is intended that in 2023, all Year 11 students will study Level 1 NCEA through Te Kura. Upon this adoption of NCEA, consultations surrounding how best to offer the Award in their contexts will be undertaken.

## **Naming**

- 21 The prospect of altering the name of the Award to reflect the Realm context was raised during consultations with the Niue and Cook Islands NCEA panels. There was no desire from the panels to alter the name and it was preferred that the current name be retained.
- 22 The Secretary of Education from the Cook Islands and the Director of Education from Niue confirmed that upon consultation with the relevant local governments, no concerns were raised regarding the origin or naming of the Award.

## **Financial Implications**

- 23 The Award was fully funded as part of Ministry baselines in Budget 2021. The current scope of the Award includes all state and state-integrated secondary schools and wharekura in New Zealand, funding a maximum of 450 schools, equating to \$900,000 in prize money.
- 24 Forecast underspends within the ongoing baseline funding for the Award will be used to extend eligibility to schools from the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau.

## **Consultation**

- 25 This paper was authored by the Ministry of Education.
- 26 The Ministry for Pacific Peoples was consulted.
- 27 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was consulted.
- 28 The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was consulted.
- 29 The Cook Islands and Niue NCEA panels were consulted.
- 30 The Cook Islands Ministry of Education was consulted.
- 31 Tokelau will be consulted on the implementation of the Award once they have adopted NCEA (due to take place from 2023).

## **Communications**

- 32 The eligibility of schools in the Realm Nations will be communicated to them by the Award's administrative team at the Ministry of Education. Key contacts consulted during the development process will be notified of their eligibility.
- 33 The Cook Islands Ministry of Education will also be notified.

- 34 Representatives from Niue High School will be notified directly. This is the only eligible school in Niue.

### Proactive Release

- 35 I propose to release this paper proactively. The release will be subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

### Recommendations

The Minister for Education recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **agree** to extend eligibility of the Award to the Realm Nations of the Cook Islands, Niue, and the dependant territory of Tokelau;
- 2 **note** that further consultation with Tokelau will follow prior to offering the Award.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Jan Tinetti

Associate Minister for Education



# Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Extending Eligibility of the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award to the Realm Nations

**Portfolio** Associate Education (School Operations)

On 26 October 2022, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC):

- 1 **noted** that in 2019, SWC agreed to establish the Prime Minister's Vocational Excellence Award (the Award) to enable schools and wharekura to publicly affirm the value of vocational education and pathways by celebrating the individual achievements of vocational students [SWC-19-MIN-0083];
- 2 **noted** that the current parameters of the Award include New Zealand schools and do not explicitly extend eligibility to schools in Realm Nations;
- 3 **agreed** to extend eligibility of the Award to the Realm Nations of the Cook Islands, Niue, and the dependant territory of Tokelau;
- 4 **noted** that further consultation with Tokelau will follow prior to offering the Award.

Rachel Clarke  
Committee Secretary

**Present:**

Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Kelvin Davis (Chair)  
Hon Peeni Henare  
Hon Hon Jan Tinetti  
Hon Kiri Allan  
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Office of the Chair  
Officials Committee for SWC