

Cabinet Paper material

Proactive release

Minister & portfolio	Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education, Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education
Name of package	Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative
Date considered	26 January 2021
Date of release	23 April 2021

These documents have been proactively released:

Cabinet paper: Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

26 January 2021

Minister of Education, Associate Minister of Education

Cabinet Minute: CBC-20-MIN-0130

16 December 2020

Cabinet Office

Education Report: Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

23 November 2020

Ministry of Education

Briefing Note: Draft Cabinet Paper: Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

4 December 2020

Ministry of Education

Aide Memoire: Talking points for CBC item - Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

11 December 2020

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

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

- Section 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion
- Section 9(2)(j) to avoid prejudice to negotiations

You can read the Official Information Act 1982 here:

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

Budget Sensitive

Office of the Minister of Education
Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Chair, Cabinet Business Committee

Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

Proposal

1. This paper updates Cabinet on the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative. This paper seeks Cabinet approval to:
 - 1.1. continue the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative to provide stigma free access to period products for up to approximately 406,000¹ young people; and
 - 1.2. transfer 9(2)(j) of the 2020/21 operating underspend from the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme to fund the initiative until June 2024.

Relation to Government Priorities

2. Addressing inequality and creating a fair Aotearoa is at the centre of this initiative, in line with this Government's priority to lay the foundations for the future. Our commitment to this is laid out in both our Manifesto commitment and the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.
3. The Labour Manifesto 2020 states that "Labour will continue to roll out our programme to address period poverty through providing free access to period products in schools and will look to expand this programme."
4. The Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative contributes to the outcomes of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, including that 'children and young people have what they need' by helping families with the cost of essentials.

Executive Summary

5. New Zealand research has indicated that not all children and young people are able to access the period products they need because of cost. This impacts on their wellbeing and can affect attendance and engagement at school, work and activities.
6. In March 2020, Cabinet agreed to a two stage opt-in initiative to provide access to free period products in all state schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094]. Stage one involves implementation in 15 schools and kura in the Waikato

¹ Based on female roll in 2020; may not include non-binary and gender-diverse students and does not account for roll size changes over time.

education region. Stage two involves a national roll-out on an opt-in basis to all state schools and kura in Aotearoa New Zealand.

7. Initial funding of \$2.592 million was provided from the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund in March 2020 to establish the initiative, this funding ends in June 2021.
8. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, stage one commenced in Term 3 2020 and stage two (nationwide rollout) will be implemented from Term 2 2021. Completing the full stage one process will ensure the voices of young people and schools are incorporated into the design of the national rollout. We have initial findings from stage one that indicate young people prefer pads but also value choice in product (including for cultural reason), valued privacy when accessing products. They wanted to see stigma around menstruation addressed and wanted access to information and education.
9. We propose to fund the initiative from Term 2 2021 until June 2023 through fiscally neutral means. Lead times in the implementation of the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme have resulted in an expected operational underspend for 2020/21. Therefore, we are seeking Cabinet approval to transfer 9(2)(j) from the Ka Ora Ka Ako underspend to the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative over four financial years (including part of 2020/21 as there are higher than anticipated student uptake rates from initial costings).
10. If Cabinet agrees to the proposal, the Ministry of Education will undertake an open tender process in February/March 2021 that is competitive, offers value for money and ensures continuity of supply.

Background

11. Menstruation is a fact of life for half the population. According to analysis of the 2014/15 New Zealand Health Survey, 48 per cent of girls are menstruating by the start of secondary school, and more than 95 per cent are menstruating by the end of Year 13.² Despite this, young people don't always have access to the period products they need to feel comfortable and engaged at school.
12. The Youth19 Survey³ found 12 per cent of year 9 to 13 students who menstruate reported difficulty accessing products due to cost. Approximately one in twelve students reported having missed school due to a lack of access to products. This trend is worse for lower decile schools, but barriers to access exist for students in schools of all deciles.
13. Providing access to free period products to those who need it in all state schools and kura is intended to:

² Donovan, S. & Telfar-Barnard, L. (2019). 'Age of first menstruation in New Zealand: findings from first ever national-level data and implications for age-appropriate education and support', *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 132(1500) pp100-102

³ Youth19 Period Poverty Fact Sheet prepared by Youth19 project team
<https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications/2020/2/19/period-poverty-fact-sheet>

- 13.1. reduce barriers to access to education;
 - 13.2. improve child and youth wellbeing;
 - 13.3. reduce financial strain on families and whānau experiencing poverty/material hardship; and
 - 13.4. promote positive gender norms and reduce stigmatisation of menstruation.
14. Providing access to period products for anyone who needs in schools and kura will:
- 14.1. prevent stigma associated with material disadvantage, as availability within a school or kura would be universal, and young people living in hardship will not be singled out for support; and
 - 14.2. recognise that genuine need is broad and is determined by access, ensuring that the children and young people who need period items have stigma-free access to them.
15. In March 2020 Cabinet noted that ongoing funding for this initiative would be sought in Budget 2021 and this would be informed by this report back on stage one [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094].

Report Back on Stage One

16. The original timeline to implement the initiative following public announcement was, stage one would commence in Term 2 2020 followed by national rollout beginning in Term 4 2020, reaching all schools in Term 2 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown and impacts on schools, the announcement of this initiative was delayed until June 2020, this resulted in delays in implementation.

Implementation of stage one commenced during Term 3 2020

17. A rolling implementation of stage one commenced towards the end of Term 3 2020 in all 15 participating schools, so Term 4 is the first full school term that the initiative is operational in all 15 schools. The schools and kura are a mix of primary, intermediate, area and secondary schools in urban and rural areas. There are four kura kaupapa Māori involved in stage one, and a high proportion of ākonga Māori attending the other schools. A list of the schools involved in stage one is at Annex 1.
18. Five suppliers (Oi, The Warehouse Group, KidsCan, Kimberly Clark [Kotex] and Asaleo Care [Libra]) are testing different approaches to providing access to the period products, generating insights into product use and dispensing options.
19. Pads and tampons are being supplied for stage one. Suppliers are using various approaches to test a mix of different pad and tampon products and ways for young people to access these products, including:
- 19.1. being provided sample purse packs and forms to order products which can be done electronically and/or manually;
 - 19.2. pre-made packs, bulk product deliveries and a coupon system;

- 19.3. distributed samples and subscription kits in school assemblies. Young people make their order and pick up their products from a school collection point determined by the school coordinator and student leaders; and
- 19.4. dispenser systems in schools with some product made available at other distribution points, such as the main office or school nurse.

The initiative has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those involved and generated valuable insights

- 20. The approach to prioritise the voices of young people and staff and implement these voices and findings into a wider roll-out has been well-received. By listening to the experiences and ideas of young people through targeted engagement, officials are able to design an initiative that meets the needs of young people. Their views and experiences on the barriers and solutions are important to ensuring equitable and stigma-free access to period products in schools and kura.
- 21. Nest Consulting has been engaged to lead the student voice component of stage one. Nest are engaging with young people to understand the barriers that they currently face in accessing period products. In addition to facilitating student focus groups at the 15 schools, they are also seeking feedback from young people in other schools that they currently work with in both the North and South Islands.
- 22. While engagement is ongoing throughout the implementation of stage one, there are initial findings relating to product choice and access, stigma of menstruation and access to information and education. The initial findings include:
 - 22.1. personal choice in the type of period product is important, influenced by culture and family. Many young people prefer to primarily use pads, but using a mix of products (tampons and pads) is common;
 - 22.2. a preference for bathroom dispensers and a need for privacy and access to the products to be discreet;
 - 22.3. widespread acknowledgement that periods are stigmatised, and young people would like to see more open conversations about menstrual health; and
 - 22.4. there is a need for education and information about menstruation, period products and the initiative for young people of all genders and school staff.
- 23. These findings have informed the proposed design of the nationwide rollout, outlined in paragraphs 25 to 27 below. The final design will be refined as more insights from the engagement in stage one are gathered and evaluated.

Implementation of stage two

- 24. Given the importance of listening and learning from young people during stage one to inform the roll-out, the Ministry of Education has delayed the implementation of stage two until Term 2, 2021. Completing the full stage one process will ensure the voices of young people are incorporated into the design of the national rollout.

Proposed design of nationwide roll out

25. The five suppliers are trialling distribution methods. It is expected that dispensers will be available in all schools that opt-in and that these will be placed in locations that are discreet for young people to access. The supplier(s) will be responsible for the end-to-end solution. Officials will ensure accessibility requirements are made explicit in the tender documents and provide guidance to schools on providing access in gender-neutral settings to ensure equitable access for all young people in need. There may be some appetite for other distribution methods and the Ministry of Education will investigate a personalised ordering model.

There is a need for quality assurance and support when it comes to education resources

26. There are many education resources available; however, their quality is variable as is the confidence of teachers in using them. From Term 1 2021, Curriculum Leads will work in partnership with schools, kura, centre-based early learning services and kōhanga reo with a focus to support the Health and Physical Education curriculum area which will support education in this area. However, there is a need in the short term to do more.
27. We propose that the Ministry of Education partners with health educators, organisations and young people ensure access to further address the quality and accessibility of curriculum resources and information. The Ministry of Education will monitor the effectiveness of this approach through its increased frontline curriculum support in the regions.

Proposed approach to funding and communicating the continuation of the initiative

28. The Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme provides a daily nutritious lunch to students in schools with high concentrations of socioeconomic disadvantage. As part of the Government's COVID-19 Response and Recovery approach, the programme is being expanded to 25 per cent of children and young people in 2021.
29. Original costings for the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches expansion were based on using a few larger suppliers to service most of the expansion schools. This was to facilitate a rapid rollout in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a responsive approach to prioritise local employment opportunities and community engagement has been adopted (METIS 1234990 refers). This approach takes longer to implement due to the time needed to plan, prepare, start and expand supplier and school operational capability. These longer lead in times have resulted in an expected operational underspend for 2020/21.
30. As part of the March Baseline Update, we propose to transfer **9(2)(j)** from the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme underspend to the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative over the 2020/21 (partial year), 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. This will fund the nationwide provision of free period products for all schools and kura that opt into the initiative until June

2024. Details on the funding profile are outlined in the financial implications section below.

Agreement to continue and fund the initiative is needed to undertake a competitive tender process that ensures continuity of supply

31. Delaying stage two will impact the timeline for procurement. As funding for the initiative currently ends in June 2021, the Ministry of Education would only be able to offer a very short contract for less than 3 months with no guarantee of an extension beyond this. 9(2)(g)(i)

32. Cabinet agreement to provide funding to continue the initiative at this time is critical to the preventing further delays. This will enable the Ministry of Education to proceed with procurement for the nationwide rollout in February/March 2021 and offer a contract to the successful supplier(s) that incentivises competitive proposals and allows implementation in schools from May 2021.
33. If funding is not secured in 2020 there will be further delays to implementing stage two.

Financial Implications

34. 9(2)(g)(i)
- Officials have therefore based costings for this initiative on the financial insights from stage one and conversations with the Department of Education in Victoria, Australia which recently implemented a state-wide roll out of a similar initiative.
35. The Victorian scheme has assumed an 80 per cent take up (approximately 311,000 female students) in approximately 1,500 schools with a budget of AUD\$20.7m over four years. Victorian officials advised that the 5-year contract length was important in securing competitive prices for the initiative.

36. Based on this information, 9(2)(j)

Table 1: Indicative costings for continuing the initiative

Operating input	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Period Products	9(2)(j)				
Staffing FTE	.083	.487	.410	.416	1.397
Education resources	9(2)(j)				

Total Operating	9(2)(j)
Total Capital	

Consultation

37. The Ministry of Education prepared this paper. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, Ministry for Women, Ministry of Health, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Te Puni Kōkiri, Office of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Youth Development and Ministry of Social Development were consulted on this paper.

38. Officials from the Victoria Department of Education (Australia) were consulted on their approach to universal provision of period products in secondary schools.

Legislative Implications

39. This paper has no legislative implications.

Impact Analysis

40. An impact analysis is not required as this paper does not propose legislative or regulatory changes.

Human Rights

41. There are no inconsistencies identified with the proposal in respect of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Population Implications

42. The table below summarises the impacts of these proposals on population groups:

Population group	How the proposal may affect this group
Māori and Pacific peoples	This proposal will have significant benefits for Māori and Pacific children and young people who menstruate.
Female, trans-gender, non-binary and intersex children and young people	This proposal will have significant benefits for children and young people who menstruate, including female, transgender, non-binary and intersex children and young people.
Disabled people	Implementation and delivery of period products in each school and kura will meet the access needs and requirements of young people with disabilities.

Publicity

43. We will look for an opportunity to announce this at a suitable event, or at the post-Cabinet press conference.


Proactive Release

44. Pending your agreement, we intend to proactively release this paper following the announcement of the continuation of funding for the initiative. Release will be subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister of Education and the Associate Minister of Education recommends that Cabinet Business Committee:

- note** that in March 2020 Cabinet agreed to a two stage opt-in initiative to provide access to free pads and tampons in all state and state-integrated schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094];
- note** that funding for the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative is time-limited until the end of the 2021 financial year;
- note** that this paper responds to the invitation by Cabinet to the Minister of Education to report back to Cabinet on stage one of the initiative and proposed next steps by December 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0094];
- note** that stage one of the initiative is currently operational in 15 schools in the Waikato region; COVID-19 pandemic has delayed implementation and the Ministry of Education are now working towards a Term 2 2021 nationwide rollout (stage two);
- agree** to continue the initiative beyond June 2021;
- agree** that funding for the initiative until June 2024 be provided from an operating underspend in 2020/21 for the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Health School Lunches programme, as outlined in the table below;
- approve** the following fiscally neutral adjustment to provide for the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative, with no impact on the operating balance and/or net core Crown debt;

\$m - increase / (decrease)					
Vote Education Minister of Education	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & Outyears
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA: Non- Departmental Output Expense School Lunch Programme					
Multi-category Expenses and Capital Expenditure Outcomes for Target Groups MCA Departmental Output Expense: Interventions for Target Student Groups (funded by Revenue Crown)					
Total Operating					

- agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2020/21 above be included in the 2020/21 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;

9. **note**, subject to agreement at Recommendations 6 & 7, the Ministry of Education will undertake an open tender process in February/March 2021;

10. 9(2)(j)

11. 9(2)(g)(i)

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

Annex 1: Schools and kura included in stage one of the initiative

District	School
South Waikato	Te Awamutu Intermediate
South Waikato	Te Kuiti High School (Alternative Education Managing School)
South Waikato	Tokoroa High School
Hauraki/Thames Coromandel	Paeroa College (Alternative Education Managing School)
Hauraki/Thames Coromandel	Te Kauwhata College
Hauraki/Thames Coromandel	Thames South School
Waikato	Fairfield College
Waikato	Raglan Area School
Waikato	Fraser High School
Matamata Piako	Te Wharekura o te Rau Aroha
Matamata Piako	Te Wharekura o te Kaokaoroa o Patetere
Matamata Piako	Putaruru College
Hamilton City	Peachgrove Intermediate
Hamilton City	Nga Taiatea Wharekura
Hamilton City	Tai Wananga



Cabinet Business Committee

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.

Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

Portfolios **Education / Associate Education (Hon Jan Tinetti)**

On 16 December 2020, the Cabinet Business Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-20-MIN-0536]:

- 1 **noted** that on 11 March 2020, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC) agreed to a two stage opt-in initiative to provide access to free pads and tampons in all state and state-integrated schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014];
- 2 **noted** that funding for the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative is time-limited until the end of the 2021 financial year;
- 3 **noted** that on 11 March 2020, SWC invited the Minister of Education to report back to Cabinet on stage one of the initiative and proposed next steps by December 2020 [SWC-20-MIN-0014];
- 4 **noted** that stage one of the initiative is currently operational in 15 schools in the Waikato region; COVID-19 pandemic has delayed implementation and the Ministry of Education are now working towards a Term 2 2021 nationwide rollout (stage two);
- 5 **agreed** to continue the initiative beyond June 2021;
- 6 **agreed** that funding for the initiative until June 2024 be provided from an operating underspend in 2020/21 for the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Health School Lunches programme, as outlined in the table below;

- 7 **approved** the following fiscally neutral adjustment to provide for the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative, with no impact on the operating balance and/or net core Crown debt;

Vote Education Minister of Education	\$m - increase / (decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & Outyears
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Outcomes for Target Student Groups MCA: Non- Departmental Output Expense School Lunch Programme	9(2)(j)				
Multi-category Expenses and Capital Expenditure Outcomes for Target Groups MCA Departmental Output Expense: Interventions for Target Student Groups (funded by Revenue Crown)					
Total Operating					

- 8 **agreed** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2020/21 above be included in the 2020/21 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 9 **noted** that the Ministry of Education will undertake an open tender process in February/March 2021;
- 10 **9(2)(j)**

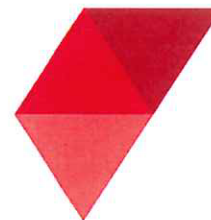
Gerrard Carter
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon Stuart Nash
Hon Kris Faafoi
Hon Jan Tinetti
Hon Dr David Clark
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Officials present from:

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



Education Report: Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	23 November 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	Budget Sensitive	METIS No:	1244970
Drafter:	9(2)(a)	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Key contact and number:		DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	N/A	Round robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide you with a progress update on the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative;
- seek your direction about the future of the initiative;
- seek your agreement to pursue a pre-commitment from Cabinet for ongoing outyears funding for the initiative; and
- seek your agreement to public announcement for this pre-commitment.

Summary

- In March 2020, Cabinet agreed to a two-staged opt-in initiative to provide access to free period products (pads and tampons) in all state and state-integrated schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094]. Stage one includes implementation in 15 schools in the Waikato; stage two is a phased nationwide rollout. Funding for the initiative commenced in March 2020 and ends in June 2021.
- You were invited to report back to Cabinet on stage one of this initiative and proposed next steps by December 2020. Cabinet noted that we would seek ongoing funding for this initiative in Budget 2021, and this would be informed by your report back on stage one.
- Stage one of the initiative is now underway in 15 schools in the Waikato region. Delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic pushed out our timelines for implementation and stage two (national rollout) will be implemented from Term 2 2021 until the end of June 2021. This is to ensure we can incorporate the voices of young people, the sector and suppliers, as well as the findings from stage one into the national rollout.

- This has potential implications for the open tender and means we are only able to offer a short-term contract to suppliers with no guarantee of an extension. 9(2)(j)

9(2)(j)

- We are therefore recommending you:
 - agree to continue the initiative beyond June 2021;
 - seek a pre-commitment from Cabinet to ongoing funding of up to 9(2)(j) 9(2)(j) 9(2)(f)(iv) contingency and charged against Budget 2021; and
 - seek agreement from Cabinet to an early announcement of the continuation of the initiative.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- note** that in March 2020, Cabinet agreed to a two-staged opt-in initiative to provide access to free period products in all state and state-integrated schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094];
- note** that stage one of the initiative is currently operational in 15 schools in the Waikato region; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed implementation and we are now working towards a Term 2 2021 nationwide rollout (stage two);
- note** that funding for the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative is time-limited until the end of the 2021 financial year and any continuation of the initiative will require additional funding and policy decisions from you, as outlined below;
- note** you were invited to report back to Cabinet on stage one of the initiative and proposed next steps by December 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0094];
- agree** to continue the initiative to provide stigma-free access to period products in schools and kura nationwide, on an opt-in basis;

Noted

Noted

Noted

Noted

Agree Disagree

f. 9(2)(g)(i)

Noted

- g. **agree** 9(2)(g)(i)
9(2)(g)(i) of 9(2)(j)
to be 9(2)(f)(iv)

Agree Disagree

- h. **agree** to seek agreement from Cabinet to an early announcement of the continuation of the initiative, to enable a pre-Budget open tender process;

Agree Disagree

- i. **note** if we do not secure agreement to a pre-commitment and early announcement from Cabinet we will need to delay the open tender process until after the Budget 2021 process, and this will cause additional delays;

Noted

- j. **note** we will prepare a draft Cabinet paper for your feedback and provide this to you by 25 November;

Noted

- k. **agree** that this Education Report is not proactively released at this time because the information contained in this report is budget sensitive;

Do not release Release

But release once final
decisions are made



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement & Support

23/11/2020



Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy

23/11/2020



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

29/11/2020

Background

1. In March 2020, Cabinet agreed to a two-staged opt-in initiative to provide access to free period products in all state and state-integrated schools and kura [SWC-20-MIN-0014; CAB-20-MIN-0094 refer]. Initial funding of \$2.592 million was charged against the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund to establish the initiative. This funding is time limited until the end of the 2020/2021 financial year.
2. Providing access to free period products to those who need it, in all state and state-integrated schools and kura is intended to:
 - reduce barriers to access to education;
 - improve child and youth wellbeing;
 - reduce financial strain on families and whānau experiencing poverty/material hardship; and,
 - promote positive gender norms and reduce stigmatisation of menstruation.
3. Providing access to period products for anyone who needs them within and across schools and kura will:
 - a. prevent stigma associated with material disadvantage, as availability within a school or kura would be universal, and young people living in hardship will not be singled out for support; and
 - b. recognise that genuine need is broad and is determined by access, ensuring that the children and young people who need period items have stigma-free access to them.
4. You were invited to report back to Cabinet on stage one of this initiative and proposed next steps by December 2020. Cabinet noted that we would seek ongoing funding for this initiative in Budget 2021, and this would be informed by your report back on stage one.
5. We understand from the Labour Party manifesto commitments that this is an initiative that you intend to continue, with a view to expanding.

Progress to date

6. The Cabinet paper outlined the indicative timeline to implement the initiative, based on an expected public announcement shortly after Cabinet's agreement. The indicative timeline was:
 - a. Stage one: implementation in 15 schools and kura in the Waikato education region in Terms 2 and 3 in 2020.
 - b. Stage two: national roll-out on an opt-in basis to all schools in New Zealand, with phased implementation from Term 4 in 2020 and full implementation in Term 2 in 2021.
7. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public announcement of the initiative and our ability to work with schools and suppliers were delayed. This has had a corresponding impact on our timelines to implement the initiative, outlined below.

Implementation of stage one commenced during Term 3 2020

8. As a result of the delayed public announcement of the initiative and the closure of schools under COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4, a rolling implementation of stage one commenced towards the end of Term 3 2020, in all 15 schools in the Waikato region. This delay means Term 4 is the first full term that the initiative will be operational in these schools.
9. The schools and kura are a mix of primary, intermediate, area and secondary schools in urban and rural areas. There are four kura kaupapa Māori involved in stage one, and a high proportion of ākonga Māori attending the other schools.
10. Five suppliers were invited to participate in a closed tender. The first delivery of period products to schools and kura began during September 2020 (late Term 3). The suppliers are taking different approaches to providing access to the period products, generating insights into a range of issues.

The initiative has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from those involved and generated valuable insights

11. The implementation approach to test and learn through stage one prior to a wider roll-out, as well as to prioritise the voices of young people and staff, has been well-received.
12. We have contracted a consultancy organisation experienced in working with young people, schools and kura on menstrual health to engage with students and educators on the stage one roll-out. In particular, we want stage two, the nationwide roll-out, to be informed by the views and experiences of young people and educators on the barriers and solutions to ensuring equitable and stigma-free access to period products in schools and kura.
13. While engagement is ongoing throughout the implementation of stage one, we have some initial findings relating to product choice and access, stigma of menstruation and access to information and education. We have heard that:
 - choice in the types of period products made available and the mechanisms to access them is important to young people
 - young people regularly voiced the need for privacy and for access to the products be discreet;
 - there is widespread acknowledgement that periods are stigmatised, and young people would like to see more open conversations in schools and communities about menstrual health;
 - there is a need for education and information about menstruation and period products for young people of all genders;
 - there is a need for information and education for school staff about the initiative, period products and menstrual health in general; and,
 - some young people want their whānau and community to receive information about the period product choices, particularly about newer options like reusables.

We are delaying implementation of stage two until Term 2 2021

14. Given the importance of listening and learning from young people during stage one to inform the roll-out, we have delayed the implementation of stage two until Term 2, 2021.

The findings from stage one, including factors such as take-up and cost of products, preferred dispensing methods, are necessary to inform the design of the initiative and the procurement for the nationwide roll-out.

15. Delaying stage two will impact the timeline for procurement. Procurement will need to be undertaken during Term 1 2021, with implementation therefore commencing in Term 2 2021. As funding for the initiative currently ends in June 2021, we would only be able to offer a very short contract for less than 3 months with no guarantee of an extension beyond this. 9(2)(j)

9(2)(j)

16. As such, 9(2)(f)(iv) for the initiative and agreement to a pre-Budget announcement. A confirmed longer-term contract would ensure more suppliers participate in the tender process, resulting in a more competitive tender process, economies of scale and therefore better value for money. It would also ensure continuity of supply of period products to schools and kura.
17. If we do not secure agreement to a pre-commitment to funding and an early announcement prior to the formal Budget 2021 process, then we will need to delay the procurement until after May 2021.

Options for the Future of the Initiative

18. As time-limited funding for the initiative is coming to an end, you need to decide whether to continue the initiative. There are two options for the initiative: continuing with nationwide implementation or discontinuing the initiative altogether. If you choose to continue to initiative, decisions also need to be made about funding the initiative.

We recommend continuing the initiative, on an opt-in basis, and seeking a pre-commitment from Cabinet to ongoing funding

19. Our experience in implementing stage one has reaffirmed our position that stigma-free access to period products in schools and kura is important to the wellbeing of children and young people, and an important step towards de-stigmatising menstruation and promoting positive gender norms. While the initiative will support the Government's work to mitigate the impacts of socioeconomic disadvantage, the universality of the initiative is key to its integrity.
20. If you agree to continuing the initiative, we also strongly recommend 9(2)(f)(iv) and agreement to an early announcement of this decision. This will enable us to proceed with procurement for the nationwide rollout prior to Budget 2021 announcements.
21. As outlined above, a pre-commitment and early announcement are key to undertaking a competitive tender process that ensures value for money and maintains continuity of the supply of period products.

There is also an option to discontinue the initiative

22. We recommend against discontinuing the initiative. We consider the problem we sought to address, a lack of reliable, stigma-free access to period products, persists. This is likely to have been exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on

employment, and therefore the material wellbeing of children, young people and their whānau.

23. Discontinuing the initiative would see many children and young people continuing to face barriers to accessing period products when they need them. Furthermore, the establishment of the initiative, combined with the Labour Party manifesto commitment to continue the initiative¹, has created expectations from young people, schools and communities that the programme will continue. Discontinuing the initiative could therefore create a reputational risk for the Government and the Ministry.

Proposed Approach to Continuing the Initiative

24. We propose 9(2)(f)(iv) 9(2)(j)
25. 9(2)(g)(i) 9(2)(g)(i) In Victoria, the scheme is in around approximately 1,500 schools and modelled on 80% take up by approximately 311,000 female students with a budget of AUD\$20.7m over four years.
26. 9(2)(g)(i) 9(2)(g)(i) We have based our costings on the following assumptions, which have been informed by stage one of implementation and discussions with the Victorian Department of Education:
- 9(2)(j) in response to the initial findings from stage one (while the initiative will be available to all state and state-integrated schools and kura, we do not anticipate universal take-up across schools and kura);
 - The percentage of students who menstruate gradually increases from Year 5, in line with analysis of the 2014/15 New Zealand Health Survey²;
 - Product usage modelling developed by the Victorian Department of Education for their similar scheme, which was publicly supported by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists;
 - 9(2)(j)
 - 9(2)(j)
 - Up to 4 FTE to manage the procurement, implementation and communication of the initiative

¹ The Manifesto states: *Labour will continue to roll out our programme to address period poverty through providing free access to period products in schools, and will look to expand this programme.*

² Donovan, S. & Telfar-Barnard, L. (2019). 'Age of first menstruation in New Zealand: findings from first ever national-level data and implications for age-appropriate education and support', *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 132(1500) pp100-102.

• 9(2)(j)

Table 1: Indicative costings for continuing the access to free period products in schools and kura initiative

	\$m – increase				
Vote Education Minister of Education	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & outyears	Total
Period products and dispenser	9(2)(j)				
Departmental staffing	.656	.511	.517	.525	2.209
Education resources	9(2)(j)				
Total Operating	9(2)(j)				
Total Capital	9(2)(j)				

There is a need for quality assurance and support when it comes to education resources

27. We have heard from young people, educators and suppliers through stage one that there is a need for more quality information and education resources on menstrual health and product use. We know there are many education resources available; however, we understand there is difficulty for educators in assessing the quality of the resources.
28. There is work being undertaken within the Ministry to improve the delivery of the curriculum through frontline support. From Term 1 2021, Curriculum Leads will work in partnership with schools, kura, centre-based early learning services and kōhanga reo to embed high-quality teaching and learning approaches to mental health, wellbeing and healthy relationships in learning programmes and local curricula. Education on menstrual health will be included.
29. While in the medium-term, frontline curriculum support will equip educators with the capabilities to navigate and assess these materials, we recommend an approach in the short term to ensure access to quality curriculum resources and information for educators, children and young people.
30. We propose to undertake a quality assurance process of menstrual education curriculum resources, to allow us to recommend and endorse those that are culturally responsive, high-quality and safe to schools and young people. This will involve working with health educators, organisations and young people to identify and assess the resources needed. This work cannot be funded through baselines due to the significant work programme underway in the Early Learning and Student Achievement business unit.

31. We will also work to ensure education resources are available to teachers and students through existing methods such as Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) website and the School Leavers Toolkit.

Next steps

32. If you agree to continue funding the programme, as outlined above, we will provide a draft Cabinet paper to you for feedback by 25 November, aiming for you to take this to the Cabinet Business Committee on Wednesday 9 December. The paper will incorporate your report back on the initiative and, subject to your agreement, a proposal for a pre-commitment to ongoing funding.
33. We will prepare communications materials for an announcement and continue planning for an open tender process in February/March 2021.
34. We recommend you forward a copy of this paper to the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and discuss your decision with the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and Associate Minister Tinetti.



Briefing Note: Draft Cabinet Paper: Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	4 December 2020	Priority:	High
Security Level:	Budget Sensitive	METIS No:	1246304
Drafter:	Katie Flett	DDI:	04 463 1519
Key Contact:	Jennifer Fraser	DDI:	0(2)(a)
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of paper

- This paper provides a draft Cabinet paper (Annex 1) for your feedback on options for continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative.
- We require your feedback by Monday 7 December so we can finalise the Cabinet paper for agency and Ministerial consultation ahead of lodging on Friday 11 December for consideration by Cabinet Business Committee on Wednesday 16 December.

Proactive release

Agree that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time because it contains budget sensitive information.

Agree / Disagree



Dr Andrea Schöllmann
Deputy Secretary
Education System Policy
04/12/2020

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

__/__/__

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

__/__/__

Background

1. The Minister of Education was invited to report back to Cabinet on stage one of the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative and next steps by December 2020 [CAB-20-MIN-0094]. The Associate Minister of Education has been delegated responsibility for this initiative. Funding for this initiative currently ends in June 2021.
2. In addition to the report back, we recommend you seek decisions from Cabinet on the continuation of the initiative and approach to funding. We recommend seeking Cabinet agreement to:
 - a. continue the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura initiative;
 - b. transfer 9(2)(j) of the 2020/21 operating underspend from the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme fund the initiative until June 2024; and
 - c. a public announcement by February 2021 of the continuation of the initiative to allow the Ministry of Education to undertake an open tender process to secure a supplier and ensure continuity of supply.
3. We have attached a draft Cabinet paper at Annex 1 for your feedback. The paper fulfils the requirement to report back to Cabinet. The paper also outlines the option to use an operational underspend from the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme to fund the initiative until June 2024.
4. A Cabinet decision, rather than a Joint Ministers decision, is needed as this funding shift requires both a transfer of the funds and that those funds are transferred over multiple financial years.
5. We need the paper to be considered at the last Cabinet Business Committee meeting of the year, Wednesday 16 December, to enable a procurement process to begin early 2021 and the nationwide rollout of period products in schools and kura that opt in from Term 2 (May) 2021.
6. We therefore require your feedback on the draft Cabinet paper by Monday 7 December to enable agency and Ministerial consultation to be undertaken prior to lodging on Friday 11 December.
7. The reason for this urgency is that, under the current funding situation, we are only able to offer a short-term contract to supplier(s) with no guarantee of an extension (as current funding ends in June 2021). 9(2)(j). These implications are outlined further in the draft Cabinet paper.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Draft Cabinet Paper – *Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura Initiative*



AIDE MEMOIRE

Talking points for CBC item – *Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura*

Date:	11 December 2020	Priority:	Medium
To:	Hon Chris Hipkins Hon Jan Tinetti	METIS No:	1246824
From:	Jennifer Fraser	Security Level:	Budget Sensitive

Purpose

1. The Cabinet Business Committee (CBC) is considering your Cabinet paper *Continuing the Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura* on 16 December 2020. This aide memoire provides talking points based on the structure of the Cabinet paper. It also includes further talking points about the education component, the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches underspend and the costings for the initiative as we anticipate you may be asked about these.

Talking Points based on Cabinet Paper

- As Minister of Education, I was invited to report back on Stage One and the proposed next steps in the original *Access to Sanitary Products in Schools and Kura* Cabinet paper [SWC-20-MIN-0014 CAB-20-MIN-0094]. This paper fulfils this requirement.
- The Associate Minister of Education and I are seeking your agreement to:
 - continue the *Access to Free Period Products in Schools and Kura* initiative; and
 - transfer **9(2)(j)** of the 2020/21 operating underspend from the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme to fund the initiative until June 2024.

Background

- Not all children and young people are able to access period products. This **lack of access** can be from cost, stigma or simply being caught out [Paragraph 11].

Report Back on Stage One

- The initiative is in **two stages**: Stage One is implementation in 15 Waikato schools and kura; Stage Two is a nationwide rollout [Paragraph 16].
- Delays caused by COVID-19 resulted in timelines shifting back by about 3 months. The initiative is now in all 15 Waikato schools and is looking to **start expanding nationwide from Term 2 2021, dependent on securing funding** today [Paragraph 16].
- Overall **the initiative has been very well received**. There are initial findings from Stage One on factors such as young peoples preference on product and distribution method. These findings have and will **continue to inform the design** for the nationwide rollout [Paragraph 20, 22].

Implementation of Stage Two

- Dispensers will be used to distribute the product. Suppliers will be responsible for procuring, installing and maintaining these. Officials will also investigate a personalised ordering model [Paragraph 25].
- Stage One revealed young people want more menstrual health education, as such we have included an **education component** into the initiative [Paragraph 26].

Proposed approach to funding and communicating the continuation of the initiative

- We are proposing **using underspends** from the Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme **to fund the initiative** until June 2024 [Paragraph 30 and Recommendation 6 and 7].
- Agreeing to continue funding the initiative will **ensure a competitive tender process and implementation nationwide** beginning in Term 2 2021 [Paragraph 32].

Financial Implications

- Costings for the initiative are based on using organic, biodegradable period products with 9(2)(i) 9(2)(g)(i) 9(2)(j) [Paragraph 36 and Recommendation 10].

Next steps

- Over the next few months, officials will prepare for the open tender process for Stage Two (nationwide rollout). If Cabinet agrees to transfer the funds, this open tender process will begin in February/March 2021 and a rollout of products in schools and kura to begin in Term 2 2021.

Further Talking Points

We have included a small education component in the initiative

- Initial findings from Stage One have revealed that young people, educators and suppliers want more quality information and education resources on menstrual health and product use.

- There are many education resources available; however, there is difficulty in assessing the quality of the resources.
- The Ministry of Education will undertake a quality assurance process to make sure resources are culturally responsive, high-quality and safe. This will involve working with health educators, organisations and young people.
- The Ministry of Education will also work to ensure education resources are available to teachers and students through existing methods such as Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) website and the School Leavers Toolkit.
- Curriculum Leads can help integrate this work.

We propose using an underspend from Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches

- The Ka Ora Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme is being expanded to provide a free healthy lunch to 25 per cent of children and young people. The implementation of the programme has been delayed and this has resulted in an expected operational underspend for the 2020/21 financial year.
- Original costings were based on using a few larger suppliers to facilitate a rapid rollout in response to the effects of the COVID19 pandemic. Later, the decision was made to prioritise local employment opportunities and community engagement. This approach takes longer to implement due to the additional time needed to plan, prepare, start and expand supplier and school operational capability. Delivering a responsive approach often involves smaller local operators who require additional support and time to scale up to provide lunches that meet nutritional guidelines.

Approach to Costings for Stage Two

The key assumptions used to develop the costings in the Cabinet Paper include:

- 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED], in response to the initial findings from Stage One (while the initiative will be available to all state and state-integrated schools and kura, we do not anticipate universal take-up);
- the percentage of students who menstruate gradually increases from Year 5, in line with analysis of the 2014/15 New Zealand Health Survey on age of first menstruation;
- product usage modelling developed by the Victorian Department of Education for their similar scheme, which was endorsed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists;
- 9(2)(j) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- a partnership model with health education organisations and other key stakeholders to evaluate and quality assure safe, culturally responsive curriculum resources
- a two-year fund to review and undertake a quality assurance process of menstrual education curriculum resources, and to ensure these resources are available to teachers and students through existing platforms.

- up to 4 FTE to manage the procurement, implementation and communication of the initiative. Findings from Stage One indicate the procurement and particularly the implementation stages are an FTE intensive process. Due to the sheer number of schools expected to opt-in to the initiative FTEs are frontloaded in the first year of implementation. The initiative has generated significant media interest, a dedicated 0.5 comms resource is needed to ensure clear communication; and

b(2)(f)(iv)

The costings are based on products made from biodegradable materials in recyclable packaging

- In Stage One, young people were interested in being environmentally aware and sustainability. However they perceived being comfortable with their period product choice a higher priority. Young people were happy to consider adaptations that were considered better for the environment such as cardboard applicators or 100% cotton pads.
- Reusable sanitary products are being promoted as a low cost, low impact, long term option, but do not necessarily meet the needs of the initiative at this stage. Officials will continue to work with potential suppliers throughout the procurement process to leverage opportunities to minimise the plastic packaging and contents of disposable pads and tampons.

9(2)(f)(iv)

█

█

█

9(2)(g)(i)

• 9(2)(g)(i)

9(2)(j)

Proactive Release

Agree that this Aide Memoire will not be proactively released at this time because the information contained in this report is budget sensitive;

Agree / Disagree