

IN CONFIDENCE

Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

EXTENSION TO THE CHRISTCHURCH MOSQUES ATTACK WELFARE PROGRAMME

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to:
 - 1.1 extend the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme from 5 June 2022 to 30 June 2023
 - 1.2 fund the extension through a fiscally neutral adjustment from the *Improved Employment and Social Outcomes Support* Multi-category appropriation to the *Benefits or Related Expenses, Hardship Assistance* appropriation.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This proposal aligns with the Government's commitment to enact the recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019. In particular, recommendation 25 proposed that the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) facilitates coordinated access to ongoing recovery support for affected whānau, survivors and witnesses.

Background

- 3 After the Christchurch mosques attacks of 15 March 2019, people present during the attacks, and their immediate families, became eligible to apply for the Christchurch Response (2019) – permanent residence visa (the Christchurch visa). People granted the Christchurch visa are eligible for most types of financial assistance from MSD.
- 4 However, there were some temporary visa holders affected by the attacks who were not able to get this support. This included:
 - 4.1 those who have applied for, but not yet been granted, the Christchurch visa;
 - 4.2 immediate family (partners, parents, non-dependent adult children and non-dependent adult siblings) of those who died in the terrorist attacks, or those who were injured or present, living in New Zealand on temporary visas; and
 - 4.3 those who were part of, or connected to, the two mosques or the Christchurch Muslim community experiencing mental trauma due to the attacks, and were present in New Zealand on 15 March 2019.
- 5 Cabinet agreed to establish a new Welfare Programme, under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018, to ensure that those affected by the attacks were able to access financial support, even where their residency status may otherwise have

made them ineligible for any assistance from the income support system [CBC-19-MIN-0021].

- 6 The Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme (the Programme) was introduced on 3 June 2019 for a period of 12 months. The Programme was established to provide financial support for those who have applied for, but not yet been granted, the Christchurch Visa, and those affected by the attacks who are living in New Zealand on a temporary visa. I agreed in February 2020 to extend the Programme for 12 months ending on 4 June 2021, and then to a further extension ending on 4 June 2022. This was because people continued to rely on the Programme for support.
- 7 Alongside the Programme, MSD has provided additional community support to those affected by the attacks, including driver licencing support, English lessons, and building financial capability services. MSD also provided funding for immigration advocacy support through the New Zealand Association of Migration and Investment.

Most recipients have been immediate family members who have come from overseas

- 8 128 clients¹ have received support through the Programme at a total cost of \$1.306 million since it was introduced on 3 June 2019. The breakdown of grants by eligibility type and year are as follows:

Table 1: Breakdown of grants by year and eligibility type²

Year	Eligible for or awaiting outcome of Christchurch Response Visa	Immediate family members	Suffering from trauma and in New Zealand at the time
2019	13	58	11
2020	0	17	s
2021	0	17	0
2022	0	s	0

- 9 Since June 2019, approximately 94 grants were made to immediate family members of those present at the attack, and approximately 77 of these grants were made to family members who had come from overseas. Since 2020, all recipients of the Programme have been immediate family members.

¹ A total of 139 grants were made to 128 clients. This is because some people may have been granted more than once, e.g. if they lose work and come back onto the Programme. 19 grants have not been recorded in Table 1 because they did not have a recorded 'eligibility type'.

² These numbers are based on operational data and have not been randomly rounded. Therefore, numbers below six have been suppressed.

Some people will continue to require financial support from the Programme after 4 June 2022

- 10 There are nine current recipients³, all of whom are immediate family of those present at the attack, who have come to New Zealand in the last 12 months for support purposes. They are all awaiting the outcomes of their residence-class visa application, which could make them eligible for more permanent forms of income support. The length of time for processing these applications varies according to circumstances, however they can take at least 12 months to process.⁴
- 11 These recipients are all in the Kaiwhakaoranga Specialist Case Management Service, which enables members of the community affected by the Christchurch mosques attack to access support. Kaiwhakaoranga case managers work with those in the service to find out their needs and assist them to access a wide range of support and services, including access to employment and training, financial assistance, housing and other health and social supports.
- 12 I understand that there are seven more families who are coming into New Zealand from overseas and will likely be eligible for support under the Programme. These families will likely be applying for residence, which could enable access to the wider income support system.
- 13 This means that there is an ongoing need for financial support from people who are affected by the attacks beyond 4 June 2022, which is when the Programme is due to expire.

I propose to extend the Programme until 30 June 2023 to ensure that those affected by the Christchurch mosques attack are able to receive financial support

- 14 The intent of the Programme was to ensure that those affected by the attacks were able to access financial support, even where their residency status may otherwise have made them ineligible.
- 15 The previous extension showed our commitment to continuing to support those that were still in these circumstances. I propose to continue this commitment with another extension to 30 June 2023⁵.
- 16 Further extending the Programme would also be in line with recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019. In particular, recommendation 25 proposed that MSD facilitates coordinated access to ongoing recovery support for affected whānau, survivors and witnesses.
- 17 Extending to the Programme to 30 June 2023 will cost an estimated \$315,000 in payments to recipients.

³ Some of these are families with dependent children.

⁴ Timeframes have been impacted by COVID-19 as well as the requirement for Ministerial intervention for certain applications.

⁵ Ending the Programme on 4 June 2023 would make it difficult to progress through Budget 2023, as decisions are announced in May. Recipients require more notice than that to potential changes to their support.

18 Last year, I was advised that we would likely not need another extension. Officials considered it unlikely that there would be newly eligible people for the Programme, considering it had been two years since the attack, i.e. immediate family members of those who were present at the attack coming into New Zealand for support purposes would likely have arrived by that point. However, this was not the case. Some people have only just realised the need to bring in immediate family, while others have required the support of an additional immediate family member.

19 s 9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted text]

Implementation

20 The Programme has been active since 3 June 2019. If the proposed extension is approved, the existing operational and IT processes will continue as-is.

Financial Implications

21 MSD estimates that extending the Programme to 30 June 2023 will cost an estimated \$315,000 in payments to recipients. Given the low cost of the extension, I propose funding this with a fiscally neutral transfer from the *Improved Employment and Social Outcomes Support* Multi-category appropriation to the *Benefits or Related Expenses, Hardship Assistance* appropriation.

22 The operational cost of administering the Programme is currently met from MSD's baseline funding. MSD will continue to meet this cost for the duration of the extension.

Legislative Implications

23 The proposed extension requires a minor amendment to the Christchurch Mosques Attack Programme, made under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018. This would amend the expiry date of the Christchurch Mosques Attack Programme to 30 June 2023.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

25 The Regulatory Quality Team at the Treasury has determined that the regulatory proposals in this paper are exempt from the requirement to provide a Regulatory Impact Statement on the basis that they have no or minor impacts on businesses, individuals or not for profit entities [CBC-19-MIN-0021].

Population Implications

26 This proposal will impact a small group of temporary visa holders that have been affected by the Christchurch mosques attack, and whose residency status makes them ineligible for standard assistance from the income support system. This is a

group that Cabinet has previously agreed to support through the Programme [CBC-19-MIN-0021]. More recently, Cabinet has agreed, in principle, to the 44 recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019 [CAB-20-MIN-0516]. This includes Recommendation 25, which proposes that MSD facilitates coordinated access to ongoing recovery support for affected whānau, survivors and witnesses.

- 27 MSD estimates that a small number of people will be impacted by the proposal. As at March 2022, nine recipients, including some families, continue to receive support through the Programme. An additional seven recipients are expected to begin receiving support through the Programme in the coming months.
- 28 For those affected, the proposed extension will allow them to access the same financial support they would be eligible for if they were not excluded by their residency status. This includes special assistance at the rate of the Emergency Benefit, Temporary Additional Support, the Winter Energy Payment, and the Best Start tax credit.
- 29 I do not foresee any negative impacts for this group.
- 30 There are no immediate disability implications resulting from this paper.

Human Rights

- 31 These proposals will improve the position of certain groups relative to the status quo under the income support system. Members of the groups being affected will generally be Muslim, but this is not the primary reason to distinguish them from other groups who are not also being affected. The Programme includes people in, or connected to, the two mosques or Christchurch Muslim community experiencing mental trauma. This criterion does not require the person to be a member of a religious community or exclude other religious groups. s 9(2)(h)

Consultation

- 32 The Treasury, Immigration New Zealand, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet were consulted.

Communications and Publicity

- 33 Officials will develop key messages on the extension of the Programme for those affected. MSD's website will be updated to reflect the extension.
- 34 A copy of the instrument, amending the Programme, will be published on MSD's external website.

Proactive Release

- 35 I intend to proactively release this Cabinet paper within standard timeframes.

Recommendations

The Minister for Social Development and Employment recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that in May 2019, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme, under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018, to ensure that those affected by the Christchurch mosques attacks were able to access financial support, even where their residency status may otherwise have made them ineligible for other assistance from the income support system [CBC-19-MIN-0021]
- 2 **note** that the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme is currently set to expire on 4 June 2022
- 3 **note** that there are currently nine recipients receiving support through the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme who will continue to require support after this date, all of whom are immediate family members of people who were present at the attack
- 4 **s 9(2)(f)(iv)** [REDACTED]
- 5 **s 9(2)(f)(iv)** [REDACTED]
- 6 **agree** to the extension of the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme from 5 June 2022 to 30 June 2023
- 7 **note** that an extension of the Christchurch Mosques Attack Welfare Programme to 30 June 2023 is estimated to cost \$315,000 in payments to recipients
- 8 **approve** the following fiscally neutral transfer to appropriations to give effect to the decision in recommendation 6 above, with no impact on the operating balance and /or net core Crown debt:

Vote Social Development Minister for Social Development and Employment	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 & Outyears
Multi-category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Improved Employment and Social Outcomes Support					
Departmental Output Expense: Administering Income Support (funded by revenue Crown)	(0.012)	(0.303)	-	-	-
Benefits or Related Expenses: Hardship Assistance	0.012	0.303	-	-	-
Total Operating	-	-	-	-	-

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- 9 **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
- 10 **note** that to give effect to recommendation 6, the Minister for Social Development and Employment will amend the Christchurch Mosques Attack Programme under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018 to extend its expiry date to 30 June 2023.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Minister for Social Development and Employment