



# Cabinet Business Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Extending Financial Assistance to People Ineligible for Ordinary Support Following March 15 Attacks

Portfolio                      Social Development

On 13 May 2019, the Cabinet Business Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-19-MIN-0224]:

- 1        **noted** that the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has identified a group of people who had experienced mental trauma because of the Christchurch attacks, but were not eligible for ACC support;
- 2        **noted** that officials have estimated that this group includes 364 people;
- 3        **noted** that 188 of this group are eligible for the Christchurch Response Visa (the Visa group), which provides special permanent residency;

#### Exempting Christchurch Response Visa holders from the two-year residency rule

- 4        **noted** that the Social Security Act 2018 provides a regulation making power to exempt specified people from the two-year residency requirement for main benefits under the Act;
- 5        **noted** that exempting Christchurch Response visa holders from that requirement would mean that they do not have to meet a cash asset test to receive a main benefit;
- 6        **agreed** that the Minister for Social Development establish and approve a Ministerial Welfare Programme under section 101 of the Social Security Act 2018 for the purpose of providing income support to the following people affected by the Christchurch terrorist attacks:
  - 6.1      those with Christchurch Visas; and
  - 6.2      people who would have been eligible for the Christchurch Visas, but were already permanent residents, and do not meet the two-year residency requirement;
- 7        **invited** the Minister for Social Development to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to draft the necessary regulations to exempt those outlined in paragraph 6 from the two-year requirement for support under section 16(2)(a)(i) of the Social Security Act 2018 within one week;

## Establishing a Ministerial Welfare Programme

- 8 **noted** that the Minister for Social Development has legislative authority to create Ministerial Welfare programmes;
- 9 **agreed** that the Minister for Social Development draft a Ministerial Welfare Programme that:
- 9.1 provides an equivalent level of support to those who are on temporary visas, are compelled to stay in New Zealand, and are applying for permanent residency;
  - 9.2 is available for a period of one year after the commencement of the Ministerial Welfare Programme;
  - 9.3 requires that applicants must be:
    - 9.3.1 not be eligible for other forms of income support;
    - 9.3.2 who have insufficient income for themselves and any dependents, and are either:
      - 9.3.2.1 eligible for the Christchurch Visa, or
      - 9.3.2.2 non-dependent adult children and non-dependent adult siblings (of those who died in the terrorist attacks or those who were injured) who are in New Zealand on temporary visas, or
      - 9.3.2.3 those who are 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;
  - 9.4 while the Programme will not have a cash asset test, there may be other general rules that apply to equivalent benefits that will be included in the programme, for example abatement rates and thresholds;
- 10 **agreed** that the Minister for Social Development may extend the coverage of the Ministerial Welfare Programme in respect of individual cases that are subsequently identified where there is a gap in the support that is available;

## Financial Recommendations

- 11 **noted** that Cabinet's approval is only sought for the appropriation changes in 2018/19;
- 12 **authorised** the Minister of Finance and Minister for Social Development (Joint Ministers) to approve increases to the relevant appropriations in Vote Social Development for 2019/20 and 2020/21, of an amount up to \$5 million per financial year, after the Budget Moratorium and once there is more certainty on future cost;
- 13 **agreed** that any increases to appropriations for 2019/20 and 2020/21 agreed through paragraph 11 above, be charged against the between-Budget contingency, established as part of Budget 2019;

## Exempting Christchurch Response Visa holders from the two-year residency rule

- 14 **agreed** to increase spending to provide for costs associated with the policy decision in paragraph 6 above;

- 15 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decision in paragraph 13 above, with the following impact on the operating balance:

Vote Social Development Minister for Social Development	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & Outyears
<i>Benefits or Related Expenses:</i>					
Jobseeker Support and Emergency Benefit	0.076	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>0.076</b>	-	-	-	-

#### Establishing a Ministerial Welfare Programme

- 16 **agreed** to increase spending to provide for costs associated with the decision in paragraph 9 above;
- 17 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decision in paragraph 15 above, with the following impact on the operating balance:

Vote Social Development Minister for Social Development	\$m - increase/(decrease)				
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & Outyears
<i>Benefits or Related Expenses:</i>					
Hardship Assistance	0.261	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>0.261</b>	-	-	-	-

- 18 **agreed** that the changes to appropriations for 2018/19 above be included in the 2018/19 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 19 **agreed** that that the expenses incurred under paragraph 16 be charged against the between-Budget contingency established as part of Budget 2019.

Vivien Meek  
Committee Secretary

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#### Present:

Rt Hon Winston Peters (Chair)  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Phil Twyford  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Stuart Nash\*  
Hon Tracey Martin

#### Officials present from:

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

#### Hard-copy distribution:

Minister for Social Development