



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Kāinga Ora Pilot Winter Energy Study: Exemption from Income Definition under the Social Security Act 2018

Portfolio **Social Development and Employment**

On 15 March 2023, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the Minister of Finance and Minister of Housing have approved Kāinga Ora to issue a limited indemnity to energy retailers in 2023 and 2024 to run a pilot winter energy study to assess if an upfront investment in energy via a capped energy bill improves the health and wellbeing of Kāinga Ora tenants;
- 2 **noted** that the subsidies in the above pilot (the subsidies) are likely captured as income for the assessments of social security benefits, income related rent, and student allowances;
- 3 **agreed** to exempt the subsidies from being considered as income for the purposes of the Social Security Act 2018, Public and Community Housing Management Act 1992, and Student Allowance Regulations 1998;
- 4 **agreed** to amend the Social Security Regulations 2018 and Student Allowance Regulations 1998 to ensure the subsidies are not treated as income for the assessments of social security benefits, income-related rent, and student allowances;
- 5 **invited** the Minister for Social Development and Employment to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to amend the Social Security Regulations 2018 and Student Allowance Regulations 1998 to give effect to the decision in paragraphs 3 and 4 above;
- 6 **noted** that the Minister for Social Development and Employment will also amend, as required, any welfare programmes or ministerial directions to align with the above decisions.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Kiri Allan
Hon Priyanca Radakrishnan
Hon Ginny Andersen
Hon Barbara Edmonds
Hon Willow-Jean Prime
Hon Rino Tirikatene

Officials present from:

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