



# Cabinet Social Wellbeing 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.*

### Exempting Social Security Income and Cash-asset Testing for Financial Donations to Those Affected by the Christchurch Mosque Attacks

Portfolio                      Social Development

On 4 March 2020, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1        **noted** that following the terrorist attacks on Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019, donations were provided through a range of platforms to those affected;
- 2        **noted** that the exemption on donations received by those affected by the attacks from income and cash-asset testing for the purposes of social security assistance eligibility, agreed by Cabinet in April 2019, will begin to expire following the first anniversary of the attacks [CAB-19-MIN-0134];
- 3        **noted** that it is appropriate to apply a permanent exemption to income and cash-asset testing for financial gifts and donations received by those affected by the terrorist attacks in Christchurch due to the unprecedented nature of the attacks, and the exceptional circumstances of those affected;
- 4        **agreed** to amend the Social Security Regulations 2018 and the Residential Care and Disability Support Services Regulations 2018 to permanently exempt financial gifts or donations made in relation to the Christchurch mosque attacks and any income derived from them from income and cash-assets tests for financial assistance;

#### Financial implications

- 5        **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 4 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

Vote Social Development	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & Outyears
Minister of Housing Benefits or Related Expenses:					
Accommodation Assistance	0.039	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.190
Minister for Social Development Hardship Assistance	0.004	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>0.043</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>0.210</b>

- 6 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2019/20 above be included in the 2019/20 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from imprest supply;
- 7 **agreed** that the expenses incurred under paragraph 5.2 above be charged against the between-Budget contingency established as part of Budget 2019;

### Legislative implications

- 8 **authorised** the submission of the following regulations (the Amendment Regulations) to the Executive Council to give effect to the decision referred to in paragraph 4 above:
- 8.1 Social Security (Cash Assets and Income Exemptions – Christchurch Mosques Attack Support Payments) Amendment Regulations 2020 [PCO 22734/ 2.0];
- 8.2 Residential Care and Disability Support Services (Exempt Assets – Christchurch Mosques Attack Support Payments) Amendment Regulations 2020 [PCO 22735/ 2.0];
- 9 **noted** that the Minister for Social Development intends to amend the Ministerial Direction in relation to Special Benefit to permanently exempt financial gifts and donations from chargeable income assessment for Special benefit;
- 10 **noted** that a waiver of the 28-day rule is sought on the grounds that the Amendment Regulations confer only benefits for those affected by them and that early commencement is necessary to avoid the purpose of the regulatory change being defeated;
- 11 **agreed** to waive the 28-day rule so that the Amendment Regulations can come into force on 13 March 2020 to ensure that nobody loses eligibility to social security assistance.

Vivien Meek  
Committee Secretary

---

**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Andrew Little  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Jenny Salesa  
Hon Kris Faafoi  
Hon Willie Jackson  
Hon Aupito William Sio  
Hon Poto Williams  
Hon Julie Anne Genter

**Officials present from:**

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

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Minister for Social Development