



Briefing

APPROVAL TO SPEND APPROPRIATION ON PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

To Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response

Date	7/12/2021	Priority	High
Deadline	9/12/2021	Briefing Number	DPMC-2021/22-1007

Purpose

This paper seeks your approval as the Minister for the COVID-19 Response to delegate to the Chief Executive of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) the authority to spend up to \$39.04 million allocated for public engagement and communications expenses for the 2021/2022 financial year. The expenses are related to the COVID-19 Group's ongoing public information and engagement campaign.

Recommendations

- Note** that when the COVID-19 Group was established in December 2020, it was identified that dedicated funding would be required for the sustainable delivery of public communications and engagement going forward. Cabinet as part of [CAB-20-Min-0100] approved funding of \$21.04 million for public communications and engagement for the 2021/2022 financial year.
- Note** that the ongoing nature of the current delta outbreak and supporting the public to understand the transition to the new COVID-19 Protection Framework has required targeted and nuanced communications on a large scale and at a fast pace. The COVID-19 Group requested additional funds and the Cabinet Economic Development Committee [DEV-21-MIN-0235] authorised the Minister of Finance and yourself to approve an additional \$18 million in October 2021 to spend on public communications and engagement for the rest of the 2021/2022 financial year.
- Note** that Ministerial approval is required for public service Chief Executives to spend above \$0.150 million on publicity expenses from the COVID-19 All of Government appropriation.


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4. **Approve** the delegation of the Chief Executive to approve publicity expenses for the COVID-19 public information and engagement campaign of up to \$39.04 million for the 2021/2022 financial year. **YES** **NO**


Cheryl Barnes
Deputy Chief executive
COVID-19 Group

07/12/2021


Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID Response-19

11/12/2021

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Contact for telephone discussion if required:

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Cheryl Barnes	Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Group	N/A	s9(2)(a) ✓
Natasha Dcosta	Chief of Staff, COVID-19 Group	N/A	s9(2)(a)

Minister's office comments:

- Noted
- Seen
- Approved
- Needs change
- Withdrawn
- Not seen by Minister
- Overtaken by events
- Referred to

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Purpose

1. This paper seeks your approval as the Minister for the COVID-19 Response to delegate to the Chief Executive of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) the authority to approve publicity expenses for public engagement and communications in relation to New Zealand's COVID-19 response. The expenses are associated with the DPMC COVID-19 Group's ongoing public information and communications campaign for the 2021/2022 financial year up to \$39.04 million.

Background

2. As part of the New Zealand government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic an extensive public information campaign under the "Unite Against COVID-19" branding was established.
3. That campaign, launched in March 2020, has included website, social media, and paid advertising including across television, print media, social and digital media, bus shelters and airports, as well as targeted print and digital resources for key audiences.
4. The emergence of the delta strain in New Zealand and the ongoing response as well as transition to the COVID-19 Protection framework has led to a significant demand for public communications and increased demands on the allocated budget.

Ministerial approval needed to continue funding public communications and engagement activities

5. The Chief Executive of DPMC has authority to approve spending under the COVID-19 Group's appropriation. However, the Cabinet Office circular 18 (2) stipulates a spending limit of \$0.150 million for publicity expenses and that spending above this limit requires approval from the relevant appropriation Minister, in this case yourself, as the Minister for COVID-19 Response.
6. Accordingly, it is recommended you approve the delegation to the Chief Executive of DPMC of up to \$39.04 million in the 2021/2022 financial year for public communications and engagement expenses associated with the DPMC COVID-19 Group's ongoing public information and engagement campaign.

Financial Implications

7. The proposed funding falls within the COVID-19 All of Government appropriation agreed to in [CAB-20-MIN-0100].

Consultation

8. No consultation outside of DPMC has been required for the preparation of this briefing.

Communications

9. Communications regarding this delegation will be handled in line with the communications approach being used across the All of Government response to COVID-19. This may include the proactive release of this paper.

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