



Memorandum

UPDATE ON USE OF COVID-19 RESURGENCE FUNDING

To	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance	Briefing Number	DPMC-2020/21-756
From	Chappie Te Kani, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Group	Date	31/03/2021

Purpose

1. The purpose of this briefing is update you regarding the initiatives funded by the \$2 million in resurgence funding approved for the COVID-19 Response Unit as a result of the approval of [DPMC-202/21-612].
2. This funding has been used for public information and community engagement in light of the February 2021 COVID-19 resurgence in Auckland.

Use of additional resurgence funds

3. On 10 March 2021 the Minister of Finance and Minister for the COVID-19 Response approved an additional \$2 million in funding to be released to the COVID-19 Response Unit, to be used for the public information campaign and community engagement as a result of the 14 February 2021 resurgence in Auckland. This funding was appropriated for the 2020/21 year, and a report back was requested on how this funding has been used.
4. The funds granted have been used for a combination of initiatives, both in the initial response to the February Auckland cluster, and to ensure that the Response Unit is able to respond should additional cases associated with this cluster be found, or for similar issues to arise in the future.
5. The initiatives being funded are shown in the table below. Please note that as some initiatives are not yet complete, or are complete but suppliers have not yet completed billing, the financial investments are estimates based on available information.

Initiative	Description	Estimated cost
Media messages and information to give	Additional media expenditure required for 14 February and 28 February alert level changes, and to reinforce key	\$1.272m

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effect to the rapid response	health behaviours. This included print, online and television advertising.	
Additional resources to enable responses to social media and web queries at pace	<p>Increased short term resource for the COVID-19 Response Group's social media team including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Social Media Advisor • Senior Web Advisors x 2 • Senior Content Advisor • Communications Advisor <p>These roles will be created for six months (further detail below).</p>	\$0.300m (estimated based on annualised rem)
Translation of Alert Level information to support the response	Additional translations required for Alert Level change information and specific information. We now have information available in over 25 languages.	\$0.018m
Sentiment research to support an effective response	Research into public sentiment regarding Alert Level changes, particularly in Auckland and South Auckland to inform and increase the effectiveness of future Unite Against COVID-19 campaign initiatives.	\$0.030m
Updates to the Unite Against COVID-19 website	Web support to update covid19.govt.nz site with changes including the development of an interactive boundary tool.	\$0.100m (estimated)
Database upgrade	Technical fix to newly highlighted boundary caching issue on covid19.govt.nz website to ensure boundary tool works seamlessly when new boundaries are created	\$0.005m
Total		\$1.525m (estimated)

6. The additional short term staff highlighted in the table above will enable the following activities as part of the ongoing response capability:
- a. Development of a dedicated Māori section of the Unite Against COVID-19 website in response to questions concerning the content being sufficiently nuanced to support the needs of our Treaty partner
 - b. Support the development of website content to extend reach into a broader number of communities (including through specific web pages targeting communities)
 - c. Social media community management support
 - d. Additional resource to develop further business-specific communications (including what Alert Level changes mean for businesses at each boundary)
 - e. Manage wellbeing of communications staff and enable sufficient resource for respite

7. The COVID-19 Response Unit will submit a final report on spending at the end of April 2021.

Recommendations

8. I recommend that you:
 - a. **Note** that the approved resurgence funding has been used to fund initiatives (including those still underway) included in this paper
 - b. **Note** that the COVID-19 Response Group will provide a further report on expenditure by 30 April 2021
 - c. **Note** that the COVID-19 Response Group proposes to return any unused funding in June 2021

Proactively Released

