



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Homelessness Action Plan

Portfolio **Housing / Social Development / Associate Housing (Māori Housing), Associate Housing (Public Housing)**

On 11 December 2019, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

Background

- 1 **noted** that in August 2019, Cabinet:
 - 1.1 agreed to the overall vision that homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring;
 - 1.2 agreed to a strengthened approach to addressing homelessness that recognises the need for cross-government action in conjunction with Iwi and Māori organisations, people with lived experience of homelessness, non-governmental organisations, and local authorities;
 - 1.3 agreed that a balanced programme of responses with a greater focus on prevention alongside support, supply, and system enablers are developed in line with the above vision and approach;
 - 1.4 agreed to support the development of a national homelessness action plan to deliver on the government's vision jointly owned by agencies with an interest in homelessness;
 - 1.5 authorised the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister for Social Development, Minister of Housing, Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) and Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing) to jointly approve proposals that drawdown the remaining tagged operating and capital contingencies (including changing composition of the contingencies between operating and capital);

[CAB-19-MIN-0384]

The Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan Phase I (2020-23)

- 2 **noted** that the Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan Phase I (2020-2023) (the action plan), attached to the submission under SWC-19-SUB-0205, sets out immediate actions and longer-term actions across prevention, supply, support and system enablers;

- 3 **noted** that the action plan has been developed through consultation and engagement with Iwi and Māori organisations, people with lived experience of homelessness, non-governmental organisations, and local authorities and reviews of local and international plans;
- 4 **noted** this is the first phase in delivering on the government's vision that homelessness in New Zealand is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring;
- 5 **noted** that Joint Ministers (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister for Social Development, Minister of Housing, Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing) and Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing)) have agreed, or committed, to draw down over \$350 million from the consolidated homelessness contingency to fund immediate actions;
- 6 **approved** the Aotearoa/New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan Phase I (2020-23);
- 7 **noted** that the action plan will be published in early 2020 following a design process;
- 8 **authorised** the Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing) and other Ministers as required, to make editorial, design and formatting changes to the action plan as required prior to its public release;

Policy settings for Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants

- 9 **noted** that clients in emergency housing do not currently contribute to the costs of that emergency housing, and this incentivises some clients to seek motel accommodation and to remain in it, resulting in their decline of offers for alternative accommodation;
- 10 **noted** that a contribution will help prepare clients for transitioning into public or private housing where they need to provide for their accommodation costs and associated costs such as power;
- 11 **agreed** that clients receiving an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant contribute 25 percent of their income towards the cost of emergency housing after seven days of first receiving an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant;
- 12 **agreed** to amend to the Social Security Regulations 2018 to enable the Ministry of Social Development to redirect the client contribution from benefits and to enable recovery of the contribution at a rate of 25 percent of a non-beneficiary's income;
- 13 **noted** that enabling the Ministry of Social Development the discretion to extend the duration of Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants will provide more time for focused engagement on client needs;
- 14 **agreed** that the Ministry of Social Development be able to extend the duration of second or subsequent Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant durations for up to 21 days for clients assigned Intensive Case Management support or a contracted navigator;
- 15 **noted** that Joint Ministers have approved the \$12.96 million required to implement the client contribution and ability to extend the duration of some Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants;

- 16 **agreed** to amendments to the Social Security Regulations 2018 enabling Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant clients to access Temporary Additional Support for the client contribution where they have a deficiency in their income for essential costs;
- 17 **invited** the Minister for Social Development to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to draft the amendments to the Social Security Regulations 2018 to give effect to the above policy decisions;
- 18 **noted** that the Minister for Social Development intends, where necessary, to amend the Special Needs Grants Welfare Programme and the Ministerial Direction on Redirection of Benefit Payments, the Ministerial Direction on Debt Recovery and the Ministerial Direction in relation to Special Benefit, to enable the policy changes;
- 19 **invited** the Minister for Social Development to amend the Special Needs Grant Welfare Programme to give effect to the decisions referred to in paragraph 12 above;
- 20 **invited** the Minister for Social Development to amend the Ministerial Direction on Debt Recovery, the Ministerial Direction on Redirection of Benefit Payments, and the Ministerial Direction in relation to Special Benefit, to give effect to the decisions referred to in paragraph 14 above;
- 21 **authorised** the Minister for Social Development and the Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing), in consultation with other Ministers where necessary, to make decisions on issues of a minor or technical nature that may arise during the detailed policy design and amendments to the Social Security Regulations 2018 for changes to the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants policy settings;
- 22 **noted** that while it is not possible to model with certainty the impact of the behavioural changes from the client contribution, the Ministry of Social Development advise that savings will occur from an expected reduction in Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants being made;

Next steps

- 23 **noted** that ending reliance on motels as emergency housing is a multi-year goal that will require a mix of supply and demand management initiatives along with the implementation of the wider actions in the action plan;
- 24 **noted** that progress on preventing and reducing homelessness and reducing the reliance on motels will be reported on regularly;
- 25 **noted** that the Minister of Housing, Minister for Social Development and Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing) will report to the Cabinet Priorities Committee quarterly on ending the reliance on motels.

Vivien Meek
Committee Secretary

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Present:

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

Officials present from:

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

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Housing
Minister for Social Development
Associate Minister of Housing (Maori Housing)
Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing)