



PRESS RELEASE

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Supporting our people as we rebuild the economy

- \$79 million boost to social service providers
- \$36 million in grants for community groups
- \$22 million for family violence services
- \$20 million to ease impacts of COVID-19 on rural and fishing communities
- \$20 million tertiary student hardship fund for 2020
- \$15 million boost to Fruit in Schools and digital sales platforms for food producers

Supporting our social service providers

Our social services have been a vital part of keeping communities safe and resilient as we face the impacts of COVID-19, says Social Development Minister Carmel Sepuloni.

“Social services will continue to play an essential role in supporting people and communities to recover. That’s why we are investing almost \$80 million dollars to continue to provide important support in our communities.

“About \$32 million of the additional funding includes responding to the increase in demand for food through food banks and other community food service providers as a result of COVID-19. This will include funding for a new bulk food distribution network – ‘New Zealand Food Network’ and support for food banks and other providers.

“We also know that more New Zealanders may need advice on how to best manage their finances, so we are providing extra funding to all 131 budgeting services so they can respond to the increasing demand for their services.

“Social services are critical to wellbeing, and helping New Zealanders through this unprecedented time, which is why we will continue to support the important mahi they do,” Carmel Sepuloni said.

Grants for community groups to recover from COVID-19 impacts

“We are investing \$36 million in grants for community groups to enhance the wellbeing of their local communities in the COVID-19 recovery response,” Carmel Sepuloni said.

“A specific focus will be made to enable Māori, Pacific, refugee and migrant communities to access this fund.

“The investment will allow groups to contribute to the ongoing response and recovery of the communities they are connected to and support,” Carmel Sepuloni says.

Fruit and vegetable boxes and digital sales platforms for food producers

Agriculture Minister Damien O’Connor says due to COVID-19, food supply chains and food retailers have been disrupted, causing problems with access to food and risking food waste.

“Food at highest risk of being wasted includes the 20% of all fresh fruit and vegetables that move through non-supermarket channels and 10% of weekly egg production.

“This initiative provides funding to purchase primary produce and distribute it to those in need, scale up Fruit in Schools to deliver an additional 100,000 fruit and vegetable boxes to children over 10 weeks, and develop and trial digital platforms to enable other novel solutions to connect food with consumers,” Damien O’Connor said.

Boost in funding for family violence services

Budget 20 provided \$202.9 million over the next four years to address family violence, and the COVID Response and Recovery Fund underscores our commitment in this area further.

Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice Jan Logie says the additional support for family violence providers is critical at a time when families are spending more time at home, and economic pressures and anxiety have the potential to spark increased violence.

“\$13 million will provide therapeutic services and treatment for children and young people who are exposed to family violence. This is especially important at a time when the usual support networks of children and young people, particularly schools, are disrupted due to the lockdown.

“A further \$8.6 million over two years will provide grants to around 200 family violence providers to increase their capacity as they respond to the expected increase in demand for their services as a direct result of COVID-19,” Jan Logie said.

Easing economic and social impacts of COVID-19 on rural and fishing communities

“Our rural and fishing communities already face a lot of challenges, like increased social isolation and reduced access to services. COVID-19 and the ongoing drought have exacerbated those challenges,” Rural Communities Minister Damien O’Connor said.

“We’re investing \$20 million to increase the scale and reach of support to rural and fishing communities, including Māori communities.

“Funding will increase access to support, advice and mental wellbeing services to help them recover from the impacts of COVID-19. It will target support to vulnerable groups, and enable community hubs and advisors to facilitate engagement, learning and access to services.

“It will also enable primary sector businesses to receive financial and continuity planning advice to support their recovery,” Damien O’Connor said.

Tertiary Student Hardship Fund

“There’s no one-size fits all approach to meeting the financial needs of students who can’t access the general student supports available, so we’ve set up a \$20 million hardship fund to help those students get through the next few months and keep them engaged in their studies,” Education Minister Chris Hipkins said.

“A major advantage of this approach is that it can be implemented easily and gets money into the hands of students who need it quickly, distributed by students’ education providers.”

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