



# Briefing

## UPDATE ON USE OF COVID-19 RESURGENCE FUNDING

To: Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for COVID-19 Response  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Minister of Finance

Date	8/06/2021	Priority	Medium
Deadline	18/06/2021	Briefing Number	DPMC-2020/21-922

### Purpose

1. This briefing provides you an update on the initiatives funded by the \$2 million in resurgence funding approved for the COVID-19 Response Unit [DPMC-202/21-612].

### Recommendations

1. **Note** the approved resurgence funding has been used to fund initiatives listed in this paper.
2. **Note** that the COVID-19 Response Group will return any unused funding at the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Cheryl Barnes  
Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19  
Response

9.6  
...../...../2021

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for COVID-19 Response

15.6  
...../...../2021

Hon Grant Robertson <b>Minister of Finance</b>
...../...../2021

**Contact for telephone discussion if required:**

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Cheryl Barnes	Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Response	N/A	✓
Sandra Procter	Senior Advisor	s9(2)(a)	N/A

**Minister's office comments:**

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- Withdrawn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

# UPDATE ON USE OF COVID-19 RESURGENCE FUNDING

## Purpose

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2. This briefing provides you an update on the initiatives funded by the \$2 million in resurgence funding approved for the COVID-19 Response Unit [DPMC-202/21-612].

## Background

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3. DPMC provided you a memorandum (DPMC-2020/21-756) at the end of March outlining the public information and community engagement initiatives being funded by the \$2 million in resurgence funding. This briefing is a further update to that memorandum.

## Update on initiatives and expenditure

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4. 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.
5. The funds have been used on initiatives to support the immediate response to the February Auckland cluster and to ensure that the Response Unit is better able to respond to future resurgences.
6. \$1,490,800 has been spent as at 30 April 2021. It is expected that approximately a further \$30,000 will be spent on staff costs this financial year.
7. The majority of the expenditure (\$1,272,000) was used for public health information to be communicated via media channels. This included advice on Alert Level changes.
8. The remainder (\$218,800) of the funding was used to assist the Response Unit in engaging with minority communities and to ensure the Unit is adequately resourced for the ongoing response and any future resurgence related communications and engagement. The key initiatives were:
  - a) The translations of Alert Level information into 26 languages.
  - b) Sentiment research in Auckland to inform and evolve the Unite Against COVID-19 campaign.
  - c) An additional six staff to increase resource in the social media team, the web team, the campaign team and in the strategic communications team. Three staff have been recruited and three positions are in active recruitment.
9. Final expenditure for this resurgence funding will be calculated at 30 June 2021 and the balance of any unspent resurgence funds will be returned after as per the approval of [DPMC-2020/21-612].
10. The table below outlines the specific initiatives, the costs spend to date and progress/outcomes of the initiatives.

Initiative	Description	Cost to date	Progress/outcomes
Media messages and information to give effect to the rapid response	Additional media expenditure	\$1,272,000	Media required for 14 February and 28 February alert level changes, and to reinforce key health behaviours. This includes print, online and television advertising.
Additional resources to enable responses to social media and web queries at pace	It was proposed to increase the short-term resource for the COVID-19 Response Group's social media team including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior Social Media Advisors x 2</li><li>• Senior Web Advisors x 2</li><li>• Senior Content Advisor</li><li>• Communications Advisor</li></ul>	\$35,000	Three additional staff have been recruited to support community management, web content development and communications planning with iwi partners and key stakeholders.
Translation of Alert Level information to support the response	Additional translations required for Alert Level change information and specific information.	\$45,000	Translations completed as a result of the shift in Alert Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living at Level 2 (updates)</li><li>• Living at Level 3</li><li>• Living at Level 4</li><li>• Support for individuals (updates)</li><li>• Support for businesses</li><li>• Subscriber sign-up information and templates</li></ul> Traditional Chinese translations have been added to the list of languages (to meet and Auckland based community need)  Tamil and Gujarati have been added as languages, bringing total language translations to 26.
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	\$45,400	Two research reports were commissioned, from TRA and Moana Research, to understand sentiment in Auckland, and South Auckland communities, in relation to the

	of future Unite Against COVID-19 campaign initiatives.		<p>most Feb/Mar alert level changes. The research was a mix of quantitative on-line survey, phone interviews and Zoom discussions.</p> <p>The resulting insights into the community's concerns are informing DPMCs work with other agencies, e.g. MSD and MOH on framing messages, use of various communications channels and overall coordination.</p>
Updates to the Unite Against COVID-19 website, and overtime cover during the response.	Web support to update and make improvements to the covid19.govt.nz site so it continues to be accessible and user friendly. This also included the development of an interactive boundary tool to help the public understand Alert Level boundary lines and where they could and couldn't travel during alert level changes.	\$73,400	<p>The new refreshed site is completed and please refer:</p> <p><a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/">https://covid19.govt.nz/</a></p> <p><a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/regional-advice/alert-level-boundaries/">https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/regional-advice/alert-level-boundaries/</a></p>
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. This included work to improve site performance and investigate potential improvements	\$20,000	This work has been completed.

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