



28 November 2023



Ref: OIA-2023/24-0206

Dear 

**Official Information Act request relating to the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 21 September 2023. You requested (numbering added for ease of reference):

*"Hi DPMC this OIA request follows a media request you recently replied to with some helpful information. Following on from this, I hope to gather further information through the OIA.*

*I'm interested in the PM's Emerging Priorities Fund.*

- 1. Can you please provide me with all formal documentation, including cabinet papers and memos which relate to the establishment of this fund and its intended purpose.*
- 2. Also please provide a breakdown of all instances of spending from the fund since inception (you previously provided 2023 YTD, 2022, and 2021).*

*For the breakdown, along with a brief description of each instance of spending (and other detail as before), please provide the date on which the spending decision was taken (can you please add this for the years already provided).*

*In addition, please tell me what has been the size of the contingency in each fiscal year.*

- 3. Finally, I request the Cabinet papers which relate to the following programmes funded: "support child wellbeing by enhancing social and emotional learning"; "funding to support a central government contribution to the conservation of the St James Theatre, Auckland"; "retail crime prevention programme additional funding"; "fog cannon subsidy scheme: in principle expense transfer..."; and, "emerging priorities fund: National Security Group".*

The time frame for responding to the remainder of your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 27 working days because it necessitated a search through a large quantity of information, and consultations were needed before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

The Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund was formally established in 2016, but already existed as a contingency in various forms as early as 2009, and is used at the discretion of the

Prime Minister. Searches have been undertaken covering many years of records held by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) for information relevant to part 1 of your request. Identified as relevant to this part of your request are some briefings provided by the DPMC Policy Advisory Group to the Prime Minister. These briefings are provided to the Prime Minister in confidence to support them in their role as leader of the Government and chair of Cabinet. These briefings are withheld in their entirety under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(f)(ii), to maintain collective and individual ministerial responsibility;
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials;
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

On 20 October 2023, part 2 of your request for information about instances of spending, breakdown and description of spending, and the size of the contingency in each fiscal year was transferred to The Treasury under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act.

In addition, on 4 October 2023, part 3 of your request, for Cabinet papers relating to ‘funding to support a central government contribution to the conservation of the St James Theatre, Auckland’ was transferred under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act to the Minister for Arts, Culture, and Heritage, Hon Carmel Sepuloni. Your request for Cabinet papers relating to ‘retail crime prevention programme additional funding’, and ‘fog cannon subsidy scheme: in principle expense transfer’ were transferred under section 14(b)(ii) to the Minister for Police, Hon Ginny Anderson.

For Cabinet papers which relate to “support child wellbeing by enhancing social and emotional learning”, I can confirm there is one Cabinet paper relevant to this programme which included funding from the Prime Minister’s Emerging Priorities fund. This is “*Supporting child wellbeing by improving childcare affordability and enhancing social and emotional learning*” (SWC-22-SUB-0185) which was considered 26 October 2022. The Cabinet paper and associated Minutes are publicly available on the DPMC website at:

[www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-supporting-child-wellbeing-improving-childcare-affordability-and-enhancing-social-and-emotional-learning](http://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-supporting-child-wellbeing-improving-childcare-affordability-and-enhancing-social-and-emotional-learning).

Some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(a). to protect privacy
- section 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials.

I confirm these sections still apply to the information withheld. To the extent your request is for this paper, it is declined under section 18(d) of the Act, on the basis that the information is already publicly available.

Please find **attached** the remaining Cabinet paper “*Emerging Priorities Fund: National Security Group*” (CAB-23-SUB-0360) and its associated Minute relevant to part 3 of your request. Some parts of this paper have been withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(g)(i), as above.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Clare Ward  
**Executive Director**  
**Strategy, Governance, and Engagement**

Office of the Prime Minister

Cabinet

## Emerging Priorities Fund: National Security Group

### Proposal

- 1 I propose to commit \$4 million in 2023/24 and \$4m in 2024/25 from the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund to support the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) risk, resilience and national security functions so that the future shape and funding requirements of these functions can be considered after the election.

### Relation to government priorities

- 2 Ensuring a strong national security system is critical to New Zealand's interests. In my 2023 Statement to the House, I reinforced the Government's commitment to strengthening our national security community, providing strong, stable, leadership in the face of increasing challenges at home and globally, and working with all of society to secure a New Zealand that future generations can be proud of.

### Background

- 3 In New Zealand there is heightened interest in national security issues following the Christchurch terrorist attacks, the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) that followed, and other developments including foreign interference, cyber threats, disinformation, and geopolitical competition in the Pacific.
- 4 To respond to these challenges, DPMC's National Security Group (NSG) was provided with time-limited funding for work on the RCOI recommendations (\$7.2 million a year for 2022/23 and 2023/24) and work on mis and disinformation (\$4.9 million in 2022/23, of which approximately \$4.3m is being sought to be transferred to 2023/24 through the October Baseline Update).
- 5 On 4 August, New Zealand's first ever National Security Strategy, *Secure Together - Tō Tātou Korowai Manaaki*, was released, which included a commitment for the Government to deliver a programme of national security reform over the next two years, in line with the Royal Commission's emphasis on collective accountabilities and national security community leadership.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

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7 s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

## Analysis

*DPMC requires bridging funding to maintain its risk, resilience and national security capacity while decisions are being made.*

- 8 DPMC faces a budget shortfall in relation to its risk, resilience and national security functions. Over recent years NSG has roughly doubled in size to respond to a range of national security priorities and commitments. s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(g)(i)

- 9 s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

- 10 s9(2)(f)(iv)

## Financial Implications

- 11 I intend to meet the \$8 million cost of maintaining support the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) risk, resilience and national security functions through the Emerging Priorities Fund. I have looked at the capacity to fund this within baselines. However, DPMC's baseline funding for 2023/24 and outyears indicates strong pressure on existing funding resources. The Treasury has confirmed there are sufficient resources available in my Emerging Priorities Fund.

## Legislative Implications

- 12 None.

## Impact Analysis

### Regulatory Impact Statement

- 13 An impact assessment is not required as this paper does not propose legislative or regulatory changes.

### Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

14 The proposal has no climate implications.

### Population Implications

15 The proposal is intended to maintain the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) risk, resilience and national security functions while decisions about institutional arrangements are being made. These functions are key to protecting New Zealand from threats that would do us harm.

### Consultation

16 This paper was prepared in consultation with the Treasury.

### Communications

17 I do not plan to proactively communicate this decision.

### Proactive Release

18 This paper will be proactively released within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet, in accordance with Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4, with any appropriate redactions.

### Recommendations

The Prime Minister recommends that the Cabinet:

- 1 **note** that the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund was established in 2016 and its use is at the discretion of the Prime Minister;
- 2 **note** that DPMC requires interim funding to maintain its risk, resilience and national security functions and complete its reorganisation to ensure it is able to implement future institutional arrangements;
- 3 **agree** to provide funding of \$8 million across 2023/24 and 2024/25 to Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet to continue current National Security functions in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet until further decisions are made;

4 s9(2)(f)(iv)

- 5 **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 1 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net debt;

Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet	\$m – increase/(decrease)			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 & Outyears
<b>Prime Minister</b>				
<b>Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:</b> Advice and Support Services MCA Departmental Output Expenses: Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General (funded by revenue Crown)	4.000	4.000	-	-
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>4.000</b>	<b>4.000</b>	-	-

6 **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2023/24 above be included in the 2023/24 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;

7 **agree** that the expenses incurred under recommendation 5 above be charged against the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Contingency; and

8 s9(2)(f)(iv)

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins

Prime Minister

Minister of National Security and Intelligence



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Emerging Priorities Fund: National Security Group

Portfolio Prime Minister

On 14 August 2023, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that the Prime Minister’s Emerging Priorities Fund was established in 2016 and its use is at the discretion of the Prime Minister;
- 2 **noted** that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) requires interim funding to maintain its risk, resilience and national security functions, and to complete its reorganisation to ensure it is able to implement future institutional arrangements;
- 3 **agreed** to provide funding of \$8 million across 2023/24 and 2024/25 to Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet to continue current National Security functions in DPMC until further decisions are made;

4 s9(2)(f)(iv)

- 5 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in paragraph 3 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net debt:


	\$m – increase/(decrease)			
<b>Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet Prime Minister</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27 &amp; Outyears</b>
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:				
Advice and Support Services MCA				
Departmental Output Expenses				
Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General (funded by revenue Crown)	4.000	4.000	-	-
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>4.000</b>	<b>4.000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

- 6 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2023/24 above be included in the 2023/24 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;
- 7 **agreed** that the expenses incurred under paragraph 5 above be charged against the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Contingency;



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s9(2)(f)(iv)



Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released under the Official Information Act 1982