

# AIDE MEMOIRE



**To:** Hon Tracey Martin  
Associate Minister of Education

**From:** Damian Edwards, Associate Deputy Secretary

**CC:** Jennifer Fraser, Senior Policy Manager

**Date:** 11 March 2019

**Subject:** Current provision of free school lunch programmes

**Security:** Budget Sensitive – not for proactive release

## Purpose

1. This aide-memoire responds to your query asking for information on current provision of food in schools, including the sources of funding for these programmes.

## Key messages

2. Education and DPMC officials do not have a full picture of all of the food provision programmes operating in schools.
3. The Government has a relatively light footprint in funding and supporting the provision of food in education settings. There are also many national, small-scale, community-led breakfast and lunch initiatives in schools which receive no government funding support, but we do not have high quality information on existing provision.
4. The absence of information creates challenges for officials to develop a model that supports existing programmes. We are designing a programme as part of Budget 2019 that would reduce food insecurity among primary school-aged children in the 20 per cent of schools with the highest concentration of disadvantage, while maintaining or strengthening existing support from non-government partners.

## The role of school Boards of Trustees

5. School boards decide whether and how to provide food to their students. The limited data we have suggests that around 30 per cent of primary schools provide free breakfast or lunch to some of their students.<sup>1</sup> As at 2016, just under two thirds of primary schools reported participation in a food provision programme.<sup>2</sup>
6. We do not have complete information on how many students within these schools benefit from those programmes, which are in addition to and separate from arrangements for the purchase of food by students.

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1 PIRLs in 2015, and TIMSS in 2014.

2 School Food Environment Review and Support Tool, University of Auckland.

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## **Existing government support for provision of food in schools**

7. Central government has a relatively light footprint in funding and supporting the provision of food in education settings. Unlike many other countries, New Zealand has no national school food programme. Our limited role and level of investment in Food in Schools until late last year means that there has been little work to establish an evidence base and underpinning framework for free school lunch programmes.
8. The Government currently contributes a total of \$1.550m per annum to two programmes (KickStart Breakfasts and KidsCan), and fully funds 'Fruit in Schools' (targeted at low-decile primary schools) at \$8.125m per annum. This does not include funding to promote healthy eating.
9. Details are included in the attached appendix.

## **Existing community support for provision of food in schools**

10. There are many national, small-scale, community-led breakfast and lunch initiatives in schools which receive no government funding support, such as Fonterra Milk for Schools, and social enterprises like Eat My Lunch, but we do not have high quality information on existing provision [DPMC-2018/19-291 and DPMC 2018/19-791/METIS 1174463 refer].
11. It is likely some of these programmes depend on donations or sponsorship, unpaid labour, or provide highly targeted support only which increases the risk of stigmatising recipients.
12. In addition, feedback from nationwide engagement on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy indicates that, even when available, some students do not access free lunches due to the stigma attached to needing a 'free lunch'.

## **Budget 2019 initiative – free school lunches for all students in the schools with high concentrations of disadvantage**

13. The proposed initiative would establish a tagged contingency to fund provision of free lunches to all Year 1–8 students in the twenty per cent of schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage, as identified in the Ministry of Education's Equity Index (approximately 493 schools, 87,000 students).
14. If funded, implementation in schools is expected to begin from Term 3, 2019. The initiative is intended, and would be designed, to reduce material deprivation and reduce the impact of poverty on children by ensuring that those who need food the most are receiving it.
15. Through this work, Education and DPMC officials are also considering how to best reflect and build upon the significant goodwill and work already being done, including by volunteers and communities operating collectively. We aim to maintain or strengthen existing support from non-government partners.

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## Relevant briefings for further information

16. The information in this aide-memoire is based on a number of joint briefings, copied to you, which address existing provision of free school lunches by government and community organisations:
- a. Food in Schools: Options for Budget 2019 and further work [DPMC-2018/19-291]
  - b. Food in Schools: Options for Budget 2019 and approach to designing a New Zealand model [DPMC-2018/19-424]
  - c. Food in Schools: Options to progress policy development [DMPC-2018/19-575]
  - d. Budget 2019 initiative – free school lunches for all students in the schools with high concentrations of disadvantage [DPMC 2018/19-791, METIS 1174463] (including the submitted Budget bid template attached as appendix)
  - e. Confirming the scope and cost of a 'Free School Lunch Programme' Budget initiative [DPMC-2018/19-906, METIS 1778270].

## Appendix

Appendix A: Government support for food in schools



Damian Edwards  
**Associate Deputy Secretary**

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## Appendix A: Government support for food in schools

Food in Schools Programme	Government funding (current and background)	Partners and delivery model	Coverage
<b>KickStart Breakfast (Vote Social Development)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1.200m per annum (due to cease in June 2019).</li> <li>• Provides for 50% of wholesale cost of cereal and milk and 33% of administration overheads.</li> <li>• Programme began in 2009, Government funding since 2013.</li> <li>• Budget 2018 provided funding for 2018/19 only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fonterra and Sanitarium provide and distribute cereal and milk, and provide support to the participating schools, which set up breakfast clubs.</li> <li>• Available to any school on an opt-in basis (not targeted).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 986 participating schools at the end of August 2018 (mostly in the North Island), providing breakfasts to approximately 30,000 students.</li> <li>• Breakfast programmes meet a different need and nutritional requirements from school lunches.</li> </ul>
<b>KidsCan (Vote Social Development)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$0.350 per annum (due to cease in June 2019).</li> <li>• Funding is not solely for food – also includes raincoats, shoes, and hygiene / sanitary products. Also previously included 'NitBusters' programme.</li> <li>• Covers purchase of products and some distribution costs.</li> <li>• Government funding began in 2008, through the Prime Minister's priorities fund.</li> <li>• Budget 2018 provided funding for 2018/19 only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KidsCan is a not-for-profit organisation that attracts funding from a range of sources.</li> <li>• Decile 1 to 4 schools can apply to partner with KidsCan.</li> <li>• Food made available to schools includes bread, baked beans, muesli bars, yoghurt and fruit pottles, scroggin, spreads, and hot meals in winter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KidsCan reports it provides food to about 32,000 children a week in 732 decile 1-4 schools across the country.</li> <li>• 45,000 raincoats and 26,000 pairs of shoes provided to children in the 2017/18 year.</li> <li>• Not suitable as everyday lunches as they do not include any fresh food.</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit in Schools (Vote Health)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded at \$8.125m per annum, through Vote Health, including for outyears.</li> <li>• Established nationally in 2005. Objective is to increase children's fruit and vegetable intake, to improve their health.</li> <li>• Current contract ends in June 2019.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed by United Fresh NZ Inc. (a not-for-profit organisation representing fruit and vegetable growers).</li> <li>• Schools develop own systems for storing and distributing fruit.</li> <li>• 5+ A Day Charitable Trust supports the initiative with curriculum-linked resources on healthy eating and gardening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to decile 1 and 2 and some decile 3 primary and intermediate schools on an opt-in-basis.</li> <li>• Provides a piece of fruit or vegetable daily to 118,000 children across 547 schools.</li> <li>• Does not provide food in the quantities required to meet food insecurity of disadvantaged children.</li> </ul>