

## Cabinet Paper material

### Proactive release

Minister & portfolio	Hon Erica Stanford Minister of Education
Name of package	Early Budget 2025 approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori
Date considered	17 Feb 2025
Date of release	10 Jul 2025

#### These documents have been proactively released:

**Early Budget 2025 approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori**

Date considered: 17 Feb 2025

Author: Office of the Minister of Education

**Social Outcomes Committee minute SOU-25-MIN-0003**

Date considered: 12 Feb 2025

Author: Committee Secretary

**Cabinet Minute CAB-25-MIN-0026**

Date considered: 17 Feb 2025

Author: Secretary for the Cabinet

#### Material redacted

Some deletions have been made from the documents in line with withholding grounds under the Official Information Act 1982. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

The applicable withholding grounds under the Act are as follows:

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials

Section 9(2)(h) to maintain legal professional privilege

Section 9(2)(j) to avoid prejudice to negotiations

Some deletions have been made from the documents as the information withheld does not fall within scope of the Minister's portfolio responsibilities, and is not relevant to the proactive release of this material.

You can read the Official Information Act 1982 here:

<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1982/0156/latest/DLM64785.html>

## Budget Sensitive

Office of the Minister of Education

Social Outcomes Committee

## Early Budget 2025 approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori

### Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks early Budget 2025 approval to give notice that I want to consult on reprioritising funding currently allocated for Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori (RT Lit and RT Māori). I intend to reinvest the funding in frontline, in-school supports to improve outcomes for learners. I need Cabinet agreement so I can formally give notice to sector stakeholders of these proposed changes as required in collective agreements by 28 February 2025 (1 March being a Saturday).

### Relation to government priorities

- 2 This report supports the Government's Budget priorities to:
  - 2.1 Deliver more efficient, effective and responsive public services to all who need and use them – in particular, to improve educational achievement.
  - 2.2 Get the Government's books back in order and restore discipline to public spending.
- 3 This also supports delivery of the Government's Māori Education Action Plan and our targets to lift student achievement and attendance.

### Exec Summary

- 4 I am seeking your agreement to consult on reprioritising funding from RT Lit and RT Māori as part of Budget 25. I need the decision this month so that the Ministry can notify Boards of my intention by 28 February 2025, as required by collective agreements (1 March being a Saturday).
- 5 Following this consultation, I will make a decision whether to disestablish the roles. In July the Ministry of Education confirms to school boards the withdrawal of funding for these roles from the start of 2026 and Cabinet will approve the Staffing Order that gives effect to the changes.
- 6 The Ministry of Education has identified that these roles represent inefficient use of resource that is inequitably distributed around the country. Recent investments in structured literacy, rangaranga reo ā-tā, our National Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa mean there are now also aspects of service duplication between these historic roles and the new investments that have been made.
- 7 To optimise public expenditure and focus resource on developing in-school expertise I intend to reinvest this funding directly into frontline literacy and learning supports for

students across English medium, Māori medium and kura Kaupapa schools. This funding will enable further scaling of existing initiatives like structured literacy and te reo matatini interventions and ongoing professional development of the language workforce in both mainstream and bilingual settings.

- 8 As part of Budget 25, I intend to direct the RT Lit funding to delivering targeted multi-tiered, in-school learning supports for students. I will also seek to provide further targeted and tailored structured literacy PLD for schools that received the Year 0-2 staffing entitlement in 2025. That PLD will enable schools to have their own targeted and tailored specialists within their schools, and options to extend to older children.
- 9 I intend to reinvest the RT Māori savings in initiatives to deliver more direct improvements and frontline resources for Māori learners, building on the rangaranga reo ā-tā PLD and supports to accelerate students' te reo matatini learning from Budget 24. This will include:
- Māori language literacy resources
  - training and support for teachers
  - growing the specialty senior secondary Māori immersion STEM curriculum areas.
  - strengthening relationships with iwi and significant partners to improve outcomes for Māori learners.
- 10 I will task the Ministry of Education with developing an active approach to support the redeployment of these qualified teachers and literacy specialists into areas of skill shortage in our current workforce where appropriate; particularly for teachers of Te Reo and teachers to take new literacy intervention roles, funded by recent announcements.

## Background

- 11 The Government has committed to a wide-ranging and ambitious education work programme to lift achievement outcomes and close the equity gap for all learners. Effective reinvestment of existing funding is crucial for delivering on the Government's six education priorities and our responsibility to deliver high-quality and efficient public services
- 12 To make the most effective use of existing resource within Vote Education, I am seeking Cabinet's approval to an early Budget 2025 reprioritisation proposal to disestablish Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori (RT Lit and RT Māori) roles to enable higher quality investment in the education system. These proposed savings will be fully realised from the 2027 school year.
- 13 I intend to reprioritise this funding to better deliver on the Government's education priorities, particularly our commitments to lift educational achievement, and build on existing investment for Māori Education as outlined in the Māori Education Action Plan.
- 14 To implement the proposal the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) must notify unions, school Boards and the Boards' association (the stakeholders) by 28 February 2025 about the proposed changes. The notification requirement is set out in collective agreements. (Formally the required date is 1 March, but because that is a Saturday,

notice must be given by 28 February.) To meet that date, Cabinet agreement is required to support early announcement and notification of these changes.

**Summary of funding available for reprioritisation**

- 15 Disestablishing the RT Lit and RT Māori roles will realise \$55.165 million funding for reprioritisation over four years (~\$19.847 million per year, from 2027/28 onwards). The proposed savings and the timing are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Estimated savings generated from RT Lit and RT Māori reprioritisation (\$55.165m)*

Initiative	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29 & outyears	Total
RT Lit	-0.941	-10.299	-13.965	-13.965	-39.171
RT Māori	-0.338	-3.842	-5.882	-5.882	-15.994
<b>Total</b>	<b>-1.279</b>	<b>-14.141</b>	<b>-19.847</b>	<b>-19.847</b>	<b>-55.165</b>

- 16 Because these changes affect teacher employment, I expect to incur some surplus staffing costs from affected staff, which reduces the saving for the 2026 school year. After that, the proposed savings would be fully realised in the 2027 school year.
- 17 The Ministry can be proactive in supporting the workforce to help mitigate the impacts on individual teachers to help the schooling system retain expertise where practicable.

**Reprioritising RT Lit and RT Māori funding presents an opportunity to use this resource more effectively to achieve the Government's education priorities**

- 18 RT Lit and RT Māori roles are included in the Primary Teachers' Collective Agreements, and they are allocated to schools each year via the Education (School Staffing) Order ("the Staffing Order"). A summary of these existing services is provided below:
- 18.1 **RT Lit** – These roles provide specialised literacy assistance to learners in years 0 to 8 in English medium who are experiencing difficulties with literacy learning. The current Staffing Order provides a maximum of 121 RT Lit teacher equivalents (FTTEs). There are currently 110 FTTE RT Lits. The roles are fully released, and each receives a salary unit. The employing schools get funding for travel, admin and a small support time allowance to manage the roles.
- 18.2 **RT Māori** – These roles work with principals and teachers to provide teaching and learning programmes and te reo matatini support primarily for students in Year 0 to Year 8, who are undertaking Māori immersion programmes (Levels 1 and 2), and Māori language levels 3 - 6. There are currently up to 53 FTTE roles for RT Māori with 48 roles currently filled. The roles are fully released, and each receives a salary unit. The employing school gets funding for travel, admin and a small support time allowance to manage the roles.
- 19 I consider that the current allocation and use of this resource could be maximised with more effective reinvestment, because of some limitations I have identified with both RT Lit and RT Māori.

- 20 The most recent evaluation of the RT Lit service (published 2014) indicates there are issues with the quality of the L service, including inconsistent practices (both professional and management) across the devolved service. Inefficiencies are evident in the significant time spent travelling to schools, and there is insufficient evidence of impact based on current data measures.<sup>1</sup> Specific findings include:
- 20.1 A lack of clarity in the service's purpose and goals, including its target group. This is borne out in wide variation in understand of what progress looks like, when a student should be successfully discontinued or referred elsewhere, what the enrolment criteria should be, and which students the service is intended for.
  - 20.2 RTLit practice and processes are variable. For example, the way RTLits assess students is not consistent; the reasons students are discontinued from the service are inconsistent; and there are no formal mechanisms for sharing best practice.
  - 20.3 Access to the service is inconsistent and levels of unmet need are known, with rationing processes devised and implemented locally – leading to inconsistent approaches and poor matching of available resources.
- 21 Evaluation of RT Māori roles has found key limitations including insufficient system-level reporting on how these roles are being used or how they are supporting improved outcomes for learners. There is considerable variation in quality, practice and consistency among these roles. The last evaluation was completed in 2008 by the Education Review Office (ERO)<sup>2</sup>, and even then, it noted significant variability in RT Māori practice and management arrangements across the country, which affected the quality, and consistency of services provided. Findings of the ERO evaluation include:
- 21.1 “There is no national coordination” (6). I further note that RT Māori can choose how to spend their day, the schools they work with and the student they support, meaning that there is no national needs-based triaging for service delivery.
  - 21.2 That some RT Māori “choose to dedicate much of their working day to Rūnanga and iwi business. In some instances, these RT Māori have developed substantial resource banks and strategic plans for iwi (17) and others “dedicate a significant portion of their work time to attending board, Rūnanga or committee hui, engaging in kōrero and developing iwi documents and resources”(14). ERO's findings noted that “the actual impact of this work on students' achievement or educational outcomes was unclear or difficult to demonstrate.”(14)

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, *Resource Teachers Literacy: Operational and Policy Review* (August 2013). Available at: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling2/learning-support/resource-teachers-literacy-operational-and-policy-review>. Based on the most recent data the Ministry holds (for 2023), 33% of students were successfully discontinued from RTLit support, 22% were rolled over to 2024, 20% were withdrawn, and 10% referred on to other supports.

<sup>2</sup> Education Review Office. (2008). *Evaluation of the Resource Teacher: Māori Service*

- 21.3 Unlike other resource teacher roles, there are no training options or requirements to be an RT Māori (like specified tertiary courses) and there is less clarity about the role and accountability to deliver outcomes.(6)
- 21.4 Current distribution of RT Māori roles across the country does not meet the needs of the Māori medium and Kaupapa Māori education sector.
- 22 Activities previously delivered by RT Māori like curriculum and assessment supports have been replaced by my current work programme in a more nationally consistent, targeted and effective manner. This includes the roll out of the new curriculum documents, PLD, and phonics checks. We now have clear knowledge-rich curricula in place for both English and te reo Māori which set out a structured approach to teaching, so that learners get what they need in their classroom programmes. This is the first time children learning through te reo Māori are being taught using structured approaches in a way designed specifically for them.<sup>28</sup> Resources, professional learning and access to frontline support is being provided to all teachers and kaiako to use these structured approaches. Rangaranga Reo ā-Tā (structured literacy) kits and PLD have been purposely created based on the science of learning and designed specifically for children learning through te reo Māori. Alongside this, new phonics checks and the purpose built Hihira Weteoro to check-in on learning progress and help identify those who need extra support earlier. Work is also underway to make sure every Year 3-8 learner's progress is checked twice a year. New targeted supports to accelerate learning in literacy and te reo matatini have also been made available.
- 23 In the context of this significant increase in support for classroom teachers and kaiako. Given the issues with the RT Lit service and RT Māori role, it does not make sense to continue these investments. I consider that we are better support learner success through reinvestment in other supports. As part of Budget 2025 decisions this funding will be reinvested in ways that are aligned to government priorities, work seamlessly with the supports already introduced, and have a clear evidence base behind them in terms of impact on positive outcomes for ākonga Māori and those that need additional learning support.
- 24 In addition to the ongoing quality and effectiveness concerns, RT Māori roles are not currently distributed to where they are most needed. The kaupapa Māori and Māori medium network has grown significantly since the roles were established, and roles are no longer allocated according to geographic need. While a re-distribution of roles could address that, the outstanding issues of quality and effectiveness of the investment remain.

*Potential risks associated with this change are mitigated by the need to improve current provision through reinvestment of this resource*

- 25 I have already made significant Budget 24 investments in structured literacy, including \$67 million allocated for structured literacy approaches and rangaranga reo ā-tā PLD and supports, as well as interventions to accelerate students' literacy and te reo matatini learning. We have also rolled out structured literacy approach staffing resources, and then expanded it following significant demand from schools – with provision lifted to 317 FTTE for 2025, which has been allocated to 968 schools for this year. This is an initiative I intend to continue to monitor and consider options for scaling in both Māori and English medium schools.

- 26 As part of Budget 25, I intend to direct the RT Lit funding to delivering targeted multi-tiered, in-school learning supports for students. I will also seek to provide further targeted and tailored structured literacy PLD for schools that received the Year 0-2 staffing entitlement in 2025. That PLD will enable schools to have their own targeted and tailored specialists within their schools, and options to extend to older children.
- 27 I intend to reinvest the RT Māori savings in initiatives to deliver more direct improvements and frontline resources for Māori learners, building on the rangaranga reo ā-tā PLD and supports to accelerate students' te reo matatini learning from Budget 24. The is will include:
- Māori language literacy resources
  - training and support for teachers
  - growing the specialty senior secondary Māori immersion STEM curriculum areas.
  - strengthening relationships with iwi and significant partners to improve outcomes for Māori learners.
- 28 This investment aligns with the priorities in my Māori Education Action Plan. More specific details on this reinvestment plan will be provided as part of Budget 2025 announcements.

*Overview of potential risks*

- 29 Given the reasons for disestablishing these roles, I think the scope for more effective reinvestment and significantly improved education outcomes outweighs these risks:
- 29.1 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED] am confident that most RT Lits and RT Māori will have sufficient opportunities to find new frontline teaching and education roles.

- 29.2 9(2)(h) [REDACTED]

- 30 I have sought to mitigate these risks by directly investing back into frontline resources.

**Implementation**

- 31 To implement these reprioritisation proposals, the Ministry will need to notify sector stakeholders by 28 February 2025 of the intent to remove RT Lit and RT Māori roles from the start of 2026. Following consultation with affected parties, I would communicate a final decision by 1 July 2025.

32 The Ministry amends the staffing order annually, and that includes consultation with key stakeholders in June each year. The Ministry will work with the Parliamentary Counsel Office on drafting the Education (2026 School Staffing) Order for the 2026 school year.

33 9(2)(j) [REDACTED] The milestones for implementation are shown in this table:

*Table 3: Implementation milestones*

Month	Milestone
February 2025	The Ministry notifies employing school boards by 28 February of the Minister's intention to remove RT Lit and RT Māori roles from the start of 2026.
May 2025	Initial advice and engagement with PCO to draft the Education (2026 School Staffing) Order.
June 2025	Minister makes a decision whether to disestablish the roles.
July 2025	The Ministry confirms to school boards the withdrawal of funding for these roles from the start of 2026. The Ministry circulates Draft 2026 Staffing Order for stakeholder review and feedback (early July). Cabinet paper and draft Staffing Order submitted to Ministers, LEG Committee and Cabinet (late July).
August 2025	2026 Staffing Order published and Gazetted by PCO.
September 2025	2026 Staffing Order comes into force. Schools are notified of their provisional staffing based on the updated provisions.

### Financial Implications

34 Disestablishing the RT Lit and RT Māori roles will realise \$55.165 million funding for reprioritisation over four years (~\$19.847 million per year, from 2027/28 onwards).

35 If reprioritisation is progressed following consultation, the financial transfers will be managed and agreed by Cabinet in the main Budget 25 process.

### Population Implications

36 Reprioritising RT Lit services will have more significant positive impacts for learners that have a greater need for accessing additional supports to accelerate progress in literacy including Māori, Pacific peoples, transient learners, and those students who are disabled, have learning difficulties or support needs, or are from low socioeconomic backgrounds.



## Consultation

- 37 The Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have been consulted on this paper.

## Communications

- 38 If Cabinet approves the recommendations set out below, I will direct the Ministry to urgently notify employing sector stakeholders of the proposed changes to Resource Teacher allocations from the 2026 school year. I will also direct the Ministry to develop information collateral to support communication of this decision with wider sectors.

## Proactive Release

- 39 I intend to proactively release this paper once Budget 2025 decisions are finalised.

## Recommendations

The Minister of Education recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that I wish to proceed with reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori (RT Lit and RT Māori), and these changes require early Cabinet approval to enable notification to sector stakeholder of changes to Resource Teacher allocations by 28 February 2025, in line with collective agreements.
- 2 **note** that disestablishing the RT Lit and RT Māori roles will realise \$55.165 million funding for reprioritisation over four years (~\$19.847 million per year, from 2027/28 onwards)
- 3 **agree** that I will notify sector stakeholders of my intention to disestablish the RT Lit and RT Māori roles, in line with collective agreement requirements.
- 4 **note** that I intend to reinvest the RT Māori savings, building on the investment for Māori Education outlined in the Māori Education Action Plan, with direct improvements and frontline resources for Māori learners, like rangaranga reo ā-tā structured literacy interventions, including Māori language literacy resources, training and support for teachers, and growing the specialty senior secondary Māori immersion STEM curriculum areas.
- 5 **note** that, subject to agreement, all required financial transfers will be managed and agreed to by Cabinet as part of the broader Budget 2025 process.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Education



# Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

## 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.*

### Early Budget 2025 Approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori

Portfolio                      Education

On 12 February 2025, the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee:

- 1        **noted** that the Minister of Education (the Minister) wishes to proceed with reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori (RT Lit and RT Māori), which requires early Cabinet approval to enable notification to sector stakeholder of changes to Resource Teacher allocations by 28 February 2025, in line with collective agreements;
- 2        **noted** that disestablishing the RT Lit and RT Māori roles will realise \$55.165 million funding for reprioritisation over four years (~\$19.847 million per year, from 2027/28 onwards);
- 3        **agreed** that the Minister notify sector stakeholders of her intention to disestablish the RT Lit and RT Māori roles, in line with collective agreement requirements;
- 4        **noted** that the Minister intends to reinvest the RT Māori savings, building on the investment for Māori Education outlined in the Māori Education Action Plan, with direct improvements and frontline resources for Māori learners, like rangaranga reo ā-tā structured literacy interventions, including Māori language literacy resources, training and support for teachers, and growing the specialty senior secondary Māori immersion STEM curriculum areas;
- 5        **noted** that, subject to agreement, all required financial transfers will be managed and agreed to by Cabinet as part of the broader Budget 2025 process.

Jenny Vickers  
Committee Secretary

**Attendance: (see over)**

**Present:**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon David Seymour  
Hon Simeon Brown  
Hon Erica Stanford  
Hon Paul Goldsmith  
Hon Louise Upston (Chair)  
Hon Dr Shane Reti  
Hon Mark Mitchell  
Hon Tama Potaka  
Hon Matt Doocey  
Hon Nicole McKee  
Hon Casey Costello  
Hon Andrew Bayly  
Hon Karen Chhour  
Hon Nicola Grigg

**Officials present from:**

Officials Committee for SOU  
Office of the Minister of Education

Proactively Released



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report of the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee: Period Ended 14 February 2025

On 17 February 2025, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee for the period ended 14 February 2025:

SOU-25-MIN-0003      **Early Budget 2025 Approval: Reprioritisation of Resource Teachers: Literacy and Māori**      CONFIRMED  
Portfolio: Education

Out of scope

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet