MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Briefing Note: Expanding Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Service

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	26 March 2021	**Priority:**	High
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Purpose of Report

This paper provides you with advice on expanding Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS).

The reprioritised funding of $17.728 million would enable 95 ākonga access to IWS (an increase of 23% to the annual places in this service).

Agree that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time because final decisions are yet to be made by Cabinet

Agree / Disagree

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support
26/3/2021

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education
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Background

1. On 4 March 2021, we provided you with advice on two options for increasing intensive support for primary students with wellbeing and behavioural needs that may be challenging to others, to be funded through reprioritisation of $17.728 million over four years [METIS 1251788 refers]. This advice followed concerns expressed by the education sector about reports of increasing incidents of severe behaviour in primary schools that pose a danger to staff and students, and a lack of support for schools that are directed to enrol students who display these behaviours.

2. On 15 March, you requested information on extending Te Kahu Tōī, Intensive Wraparound Service (IWS) as an alternative option to address the sector's concerns.

Expanding IWS

3. IWS supports children and young people aged 5-14 with highly complex and challenging behaviour, social and/or learning needs who require support at school/kura, at home and in the community. To access IWS, ākonga must be referred by Ministry Learning Support staff, RTLBs, the student's Specialist School or ORS fund-holding school.

4. There are currently 282 ākonga receiving support through IWS with an annual target of 409. The IWS service currently consists of 8 FTE service managers, 28 FTE psychologists and 32 FTE facilitators. The service will also extend by 22 additional ākonga each year until the end of 2022-2023 financial year (453 ākonga each year), by including an additional 3 FTE facilitators and 2 FTE psychologists as a result of Budget 2019. We have a contract with Barnardos NZ Ltd for the provision of our facilitators, whereas the psychologists are employed by the Ministry. IWS also provides access to wraparound support within the three national Residential Specialist Schools.

5. The vast majority of ākonga receiving IWS are referred from the Ministry's Behaviour Service (86% of current ākonga) and have highly challenging behavioural needs at school, at home and in the community. Many have been stood down, suspended or excluded from school due to behavioural issues before entering IWS – 28% of ākonga who have been through IWS since 2017 had been suspended or excluded in the 180 days prior to receiving service, and 72% had been stood down. 29% of current IWS ākonga have some involvement with Oranga Tamariki, and 50% are receiving mental health services.

6. Ākonga who receive support from IWS show positive shifts in mental health, self-control of behaviours and emotions, social skills, attitudes and beliefs, relationships with others, and access to safe environments and achievement in the home, school, and community. Ākonga Maori make equal progress in IWS to non-Māori ākonga. Rates of stand downs, suspensions and exclusions are substantially lower for ākonga exiting the service than at the start of service.

7. Under the current model, reprioritising the $17.728 million over four years to expand IWS would support up to 95 additional ākonga per year by including an additional 6 FTE psychologists and 9 contracted FTE facilitators. There is a risk that we would not be able to recruit enough psychologists to deliver this additional support due to workforce constraints – however, typically we have not had problems recruiting psychologists to IWS, so we do not consider this to be a high risk. As the funding available for reprioritisation does not include capital, we would need to resolve equipment and accommodation costs at an estimated $96,000 from the Ministry's existing budget.

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Table 1: Breakdown of costs for expanding IWS ($m)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	4 Year Total
Funding for ākonga wraparound plans/interventions	2.565	2.565	2.565	2.565	**10.260**
Facilitators	0.918	0.918	0.918	0.918	**3.672**
Psychologists	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	**3.600**
Travel	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	**0.120**
Total operating	**4.413**	**4.413**	**4.413**	**4.413**	**17.652**

8. The current structure of the IWS service means that there are already robust processes for selection of ākonga for service, training and practice support for new psychologists and facilitators and programme fidelity. We could increase the number of ākonga that could receive IWS by adjusting the staffing ratio to increase the number of contracted facilitators and reduce the number of Ministry psychologists. However, this would not meet sector expectations for more psychologists and may reduce the effectiveness of the intervention. IWS uses a specific model of practice that is implemented with high fidelity with proven outcomes for ākonga and their whānau. If the staffing ratio is adjusted, we would not be able to implement the wraparound model of practice with high fidelity.

Analysis

9. We previously recommended reprioritising the $17.728 million to support regions to work collaboratively with the sector, iwi, other agencies and local communities to develop local initiatives that provide support for ākonga in Years 3-8 with wellbeing and behavioural needs that may be challenging to others. These initiatives would need to align with the key features of best practice for supporting the education and wellbeing needs of younger ākonga with behaviour that is highly challenging to others.

10. We have analysed correspondence received from principals about the types of issues they are facing and the support they want for ākonga who have a directed enrolment. Principals have reported extreme levels of daily violence towards teachers and other ākonga, which they most commonly attribute to trauma and social or family issues including poverty, abuse, and neglect. They have requested more teacher aides and psychologist support, as well as professional learning and development including training in trauma-informed practice, and expansion of the Managed Moves pilot. Ministry learning supports are described as lacking in funding and time, but most letters indicate satisfaction with the quality of practice.

11. We consider that both our original recommended option and expanding IWS would go towards addressing the needs expressed by principals. While we do not have data available from the schools that would confirm this, our analysis suggests that IWS targets the type of ākonga that principals are requesting more support for. IWS aligns with the key features of best practice for supporting these ākonga and has positive impacts for both Māori and non-Māori.

12. Expanding IWS would provide a high level of support to a relatively small number of ākonga, while the same investment in Managed Moves-type initiatives would reach a greater number of ākonga but provide a lower level of support for each of them. The $17.728m could fund eight additional Managed Moves-type initiatives, which could

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support up to 320 ākonga per year; The same funding for expanding IWS would benefit 95 additional ākonga above the current annual target (a 23% increase).

13. Managed Moves is likely to be most effective for ākonga with less intensive needs than IWS. Ākonga typically spend one term in Managed Moves, while they can be in IWS for up to two years. IWS also includes funding for wraparound plans that support the child's learning and behaviour needs, costing an average of $27,000 per child per year. Depending on the child's needs assessment, this funding might be used for therapeutic support, family therapy or counselling, parenting support, drug and alcohol counselling, access to pro-social community activities, school-based interventions such as teacher training in trauma informed practice, alternative learning programmes, specialists teachers, mentors, teacher aides and learning resources.

14. 9(2)(f)(iv)

15. The Ministry directed enrolments for 205 ākonga in 2020. Many of these ākonga will already be receiving learning support services such as RTLB or the Ministry's Behaviour, ORS and IWS services. Expanding IWS could reduce the need for the Ministry to use the direction process and will provide a well-resourced wraparound plan to support ākonga with high and complex behavioural needs where the Ministry's direction process may be required.

Broader context

16. While expanding IWS could alleviate some of the immediate pressures schools are experiencing, more work is needed on our broader system level response across the universal, targeted, and individual tiers to promote positive behaviour in schools.

17. There is a range of current and upcoming work that will help schools to support students with behaviour that may be challenging to others. As part of Priority 4 of the Learning Support Action Plan, the Ministry is scoping a review of our interventions for high and complex learning support needs, including IWS and the Behaviour Service. Getting the right flexibility in our services will be part of this review.

18. Work underway as part of the response to the Mosque Attacks Royal Commission to support self-regulation, resilience and social skills in the early years will also help to support positive behaviour in the longer-term.

19. There is also a need to focus on creating inclusive learning environments and building teacher capability to understand and address the environmental and relational factors that influence behaviour. If we do not address these issues, then it will only lead to greater demand for individual intensive supports. 9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(f)(iv)

20. As many of the factors that contribute to behaviour that challenges others originate outside of the school environment, cross-agency work will be an important part of our overall response. For example, in the longer-term the Integrated Community Responses work being led through the Joint Venture for Family Violence and Sexual Violence could support more effective responses to issues that lead to trauma among children and young people.

Proactive Release

21. We recommend that this Briefing is not released at this time because final decisions are yet to be made by Cabinet.

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