

Cabinet Paper material Proactive release

Minister & portfolio Hon David Seymour Associate Minister of Education
Name of package ECE Funding Review Ministerial Advisory Group appointments
Date considered 3 June 2025
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These documents have been proactively released:

ECE Funding Review Ministerial Advisory Group appointments

Date considered: 3 June 2025

Author: Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee Minute APH-25-MIN-0095

Date considered: 3 June 2025

Author: Committee Secretary

Material redacted

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In Confidence

Office of the Associate Minister of Education

Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee

ECE Funding Review Ministerial Advisory Group appointments

Proposal

- 1 This paper outlines my intention to:
 - 1.1 establish a Ministerial Advisory Group (the MAG) for the Early Childhood Education Funding Review
 - 1.2 appoint Linda Meade as Chair of the MAG
 - 1.3 appoint Simon Laube, Melissa Glew, Kelly Seaburg, Dr Kane Meissel, Dr Michael Fletcher and Kylie Eagle as members of the MAG.
- 2 I propose appointing these members for a year-long period commencing promptly after this paper has been considered by APH and Cabinet.

Background

- 3 In February 2025, the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee agreed that an ECE Funding Review be undertaken and noted my intention that a MAG would be used to support this work [SOU-25-MIN-0004]. Subsequently, on 11 April 2025, Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Review [CAB-25-MIN-0118].
- 4 The role of the MAG is set out in detail in the Terms of Reference for the Review at Annex 1. In brief, the key parts of its role over the next year are to provide me with advice, develop options, undertake public consultation on these options, and submit a final report with recommendations for redesigning the ECE funding system. I expect the MAG to work with sector representatives and independent experts as part of its role.
- 5 The MAG's advice will focus on proposing changes to the funding system to better support the purposes of ECE and the Government's education and labour market priorities.
- 6 I intend appointing a MAG comprising seven members:
 - 6.1 a Chair; and
 - 6.2 six ordinary members.

Comment

- 7 I intend to:

- 7.1 appoint Linda Meade as Chair of the MAG
- 7.2 appoint Simon Laube, Melissa Glew, Kelly Seaburg, Dr Kane Meissel, Dr Michael Fletcher and Kylie Eagle as members of the MAG.
- 8 They collectively bring:
- 8.1 knowledge of the ECE Funding system, including ECE funding streams outside of those administered by the Ministry of Education.
- 8.2 knowledge, experience and expertise in the ECE sector, including experience operating, managing or working in an ECE service.
- 8.3 knowledge and expertise in economic principles and market dynamics, particularly relating to labour market participation and social investment.
- 8.4 understanding of key stakeholders within the sector and holding of relationships that can be drawn upon for effective consultation.
- 8.5 knowledge of ECE pedagogy, research, and data relating to child outcomes.
- 9 Curriculum vitae (CV) forms for these appointees are at Annex 2. I am satisfied that the seven appointees described below will provide for a well-balanced MAG and bring an appropriate range of skills and experience. In summary, the rationale for appointing each of these individuals is as follows.
- 10 **Linda Meade** (Chair) brings a deep understanding of social sector infrastructure, particularly in Early Childhood Education as a co-founder of a family owned ECE centre since 2008. She brings expertise in investment strategy, governance and funding system design, developed through her work experience in New Zealand and overseas. Linda is a co-owner of Daisies Early Education & Care Centre and is the Managing Director of Kalimena Advisory, which she founded following almost three decades working at PwC and Deloitte, where she was the lead partner in New Zealand for Deloitte Access Economics. She has contributed to a number of funding reviews; most recently the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Funding Review for Ara Ake Limited (formerly known as the National New Energy Development Centre).
- 11 **Simon Laube** (Member) provides extensive knowledge of the early learning sector and brings skills and expertise in policy development, government engagement, and sector advocacy. He is the Chief Executive of the Early Childhood Council (ECC), a membership organisation of more than 1,500 ECE centres across New Zealand. He has previous experience in several government roles, including as a senior manager within the Ministry of Education.
- 12 **Melissa Glew** (Member) offers skills in strategic planning, property oversight, and resource optimisation and brings understanding of financial and operational management in the ECE sector. She is the Chief Financial Officer

at the Auckland Kindergarten Association, which educates approximately 10,000 children annually across 108 kindergartens and 4 KiNZ centres. Her role encompasses property management, finance, strategy development, payroll and ICT. This includes ensuring that financial resources are effectively allocated, properties are well maintained, and operational processes are optimised across all sites.

- 13 **Kelly Seaburg** (Member) provides strong understanding of ECE and literacy, with skills in centre leadership and educational resource development. She is currently Director of New Shoots Children's Centre (Sunnynook and Miniland) and is a member of the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC). She holds a Master's Degree in Business Management and is working towards her Master's Degree in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education. She is also a former Board member of AKO Books reflective of her interest in preserving and expanding educational resources.
- 14 **Dr Kane Meissel** (Member) brings an in-depth knowledge of educational research, with much of his work focusing on improving educational experiences from early childhood into early adulthood. He has made significant contributions to research in these areas. He is an Associate Professor in educational psychology at the University of Auckland, holding a Ph.D. in the same field. Dr Meissel has been involved in several studies with national reach, including as Education Domain lead for the Growing Up in New Zealand longitudinal study from 2015-2023, which is tracking the development of nearly 7,000 children from before birth through to age 21. His work from that study has included research on early learning environments that promote early literacy.
- 15 **Dr Michael Fletcher** (Member) brings skills in the design and application of social policy and welfare systems, specifically in economic analysis, policy advice, and research on family and employment issues. He is an Adjunct Research Fellow in the School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, has previously been a special advisor for the Welfare Expert Advisory Group and worked as a policy advisor for the Ministry of Social Development. Dr Fletcher has a Ph.D. on the financial consequences of separation for New Zealand parents with dependent children and the Child Support system.
- 16 **Kylie Eagle** (Member) brings extensive experience in business, people and performance, and communication. She is currently the Chief People Officer at Fletcher Building. With 20 years of experience in people and performance roles, Ms Eagle has worked across manufacturing, construction, professional services, property, and telecommunications. Before joining Fletcher Building, she was General Manager of People and Communications at NZX-listed Kiwi Property Group from 2013 to 2021. She has also held leadership roles as People and Culture Manager at Les Mills International, Head of Culture and Capability at Vodafone, and several key HR positions at Deloitte.

Representativeness of appointments

- 17 I consider that the above people have the depth of skills and experience to provide me with advice on how to redesign the ECE funding system. While there are some limits to the level of representation this group allows for, I consider it important that skills, experience and knowledge are prioritised in the small group I am intending to appoint.
- 18 Just as importantly, I expect the MAG to undertake thorough and wide-ranging consultation of its proposals to ensure these are made with a deep understanding of relevant perspectives.

Remuneration

- 19 The MAG is a Group 4 Level 2 body under the Cabinet Fees Framework (CO (22) 2 refers). The relevant fee range is \$429 - \$974 per day for a Chair and \$319 - \$616 per day for members.
- 20 In line with the Fees Framework, I intend to set fees at \$974 per day for the Chair, and \$616 per day for members, plus reasonable and actual expenses.

Appointment process and consultation

- 21 I confirm that the appropriate process has been followed in selecting the proposed appointees with reference to the Public Service Commission guidance on appointments. I consider the MAG provides the appropriate mix of expertise required to undertake the work.
- 22 All potential candidates provided were shortlisted in consultation with me and those shortlisted were approached to gauge their interest and availability. A Chair was selected from among those shortlisted, who met additional requirements for this role as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Conflicts of interest and probity checks

- 23 The potential for conflicts of interest were examined for the proposed appointees. No conflicts were identified for Dr Kane Meissel, Dr Michael Fletcher and Kylie Eagle. The following manageable conflicts were identified for the remaining appointees:
- 24 Linda Meade has declared her ownership of a 50% shareholding in Daisies Daycare Limited. She has also declared that she is a trustee in Whanake Education Trust, a charitable trust focused on education outcomes and promoting the quality of ECE provision in NZ. If conflicts arise, these will be managed through a declaration to the other MAG members and potentially by stepping out of discussions.
- 24.1 Simon Laube is the Chief Executive of ECC and there may be overlap between matters under consideration by the MAG and ECC. If conflicts arise, these will be managed through a declaration to the other MAG members and by stepping out of discussions.

24.2 Melissa Glew has disclosed that she is the Chief Financial Officer at Auckland Kindergarten Association. This is a large ECE provider that receives public funding, which may be subject to policy advice or recommendations provided by the MAG. If conflicts arise, these will be managed through a declaration to the other MAG members and by stepping out of discussions.

24.3 Kelly Seaburg is a trustee of the Seaburg Trust, and the Director of two legal entities that own two early childhood centres. She is also an advisor and spokesperson for Advocates for Early Learning Excellence, a non-legal not-for-profit organisation that advocates for quality outcomes for early childhood education formed by members with a nationwide perspective. Other potential conflicts are her research with the University of Waikato on Kōwhiri Whakapae (a Ministry of Education curriculum guidance tool for early learning) and her role as Director of New Shoots Publishing. If conflicts arise, these will be managed through a declaration to the other MAG members and by stepping out of discussions.

25 Probity checks have successfully been completed for all the proposed appointees.

Communications

26 I intend to publicly announce the members of the Review's MAG after Cabinet confirmation, and once members have been notified, likely to be in mid-June 2025.

Recommendation

1 It is recommended that the Committee note my intention to:

1.1 appoint Linda Meade as Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group for an initial term of one year from June 2025

1.2 appoint the following members of the Ministerial Advisory Group each for an initial term of one year from June 2025

1.2.1 Simon Laube

1.2.2 Kelly Seaburg

1.2.3 Melissa Glew

1.2.4 Dr Kane Meissel

1.2.5 Dr Michael Fletcher

1.2.6 Kylie Eagle.

Authorised for lodgement.

Hon David Seymour

Associate Minister of Education

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Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the Review

Annex 2: Appointee curriculum vitae (CV) form

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Cabinet Appointments and Honours 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 Childhood Education Funding Review Ministerial Advisory Group: Appointments

Portfolio Associate Education (Hon David Seymour)

On 3 June 2025, the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the Associate Minister of Education (Hon David Seymour) intends to appoint the following people to the Ministerial Advisory Group for the Early Childhood Education Funding Review, for an initial term of one year commencing on 1 June 2025:
 - 1.1 Linda MEADE as the Chair;
 - 1.2 Simon LAUBE as a member;
 - 1.3 Kelly SEABURG as a member;
 - 1.4 Melissa GLEW as a member;
 - 1.5 Dr Kane MEISSEL as a member;
 - 1.6 Dr Michael FLETCHER as a member;
 - 1.7 Kylie EAGLE as a member.

Sam Moffett
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon (Chair)
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Nicola Willis
Hon Brooke van Velden
Hon Louise Upston
Hon Judith Collins KC
Hon Tama Potaka
Hon Matt Doocey
Hon Chris Penk
Hon Nicola Grigg
Hon Scott Simpson
Hon Karen Chhour

Officials present from: