

Health Report

Using the CovidCard to improve contact tracing – Joint Ministers' approval of drawdown from tagged contingency fund

Date due to MO: 29 July 2020 **Action required by:** 3 August 2020

Security level: RESTRICTED **Health Report number:** 20201281

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Health
Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Shayne Hunter	Deputy Director-General, Data and Digital	s 9(2)(a)
Darren Douglass	Group Manager, Digital Strategy and Investment, Data and Digital	s 9(2)(a)

Action for Private Secretaries

Forward to office of Minister of Finance for approval.

Date dispatched to MO:

Return the signed report to the Ministry of Health.

Using the CovidCard to improve contact tracing – Joint Ministers’ approval of drawdown from tagged contingency fund

Purpose of report

This report seeks approval from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance to draw down \$1.000 million from the Contact Tracing – Tagged Contingency to improve contact tracing through the trial of the CovidCard.

Summary

- Hon Faafoi, Minister for Government Digital Services is taking a paper “Using the CovidCard to improve contact tracing” to Cabinet on Monday 3 August 2020.
- The Ministry of Health supports the intention to proceed with a further trial of the CovidCard as part of keeping technology options open to improve contact tracing.
- The Minister of Government Digital Services will be asking Cabinet to:
 - note that he intends to proceed with the next phase of the CovidCard, including further trials, as part of keeping technology options open to improve contact tracing, subject to funding being made available;
 - note that the Government Chief Digital Officer and the Ministry of Health will lead the next phase of work on the CovidCard;
 - note that Cabinet would be provided advice following the further trial by the Minister of Health and Minister for Government Digital Services, after the completion of the next phase of work, on whether to proceed with a full national deployment option for CovidCard and alternative options for deployment, or use of other developing technologies; and
 - note that the Minister of Health will seek joint Ministerial agreement with the Minister of Finance to draw down \$1.000 million COVID-19 Contact Tracing – Tagged Contingency, to progress the next phase of work on CovidCard.
- This health report therefore recommends that the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance authorise the draw down \$1.000 million from the COVID-19 Contact Tracing – Tagged Contingency, to progress this next phase of work on CovidCard.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** that Cabinet approved the establishment of a tagged contingency to provide for COVID-19 contact tracing (CAB-20-MIN-0175 refers)

- b) **Note** that joint Ministers have been authorised to draw down the tagged contingency funding referred to in a) above
- c) **Approve** the drawdown of \$1.000 million from the Contact Tracing – Tagged Contingency to be allocated to the trial of CovidCard **Yes** **No**
- d) **Approve** the following change to appropriations to provide for the decision in recommendation c) above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt **Yes** **No**

Vote Health Minister of Health	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 & Outyears
Departmental Output Expense:					
Health Sector Information Systems (funded by revenue Crown)	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Departmental Output Expense:					
National Health Information Systems	1.000	-	-	-	-
Total Operating	1.000	-	-	-	-

- e) **Agree** that the proposed change to appropriations above be included in the 2020/21 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply. **Yes** **No**



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Health

Date: 2/8/2020

Hon Grant Robertson
Minister of Finance

Date:

Shayne Hunter
Deputy Director-General
Data and Digital

Using the CovidCard to improve contact tracing – Joint Ministers’ approval of drawdown from tagged contingency fund

Background

1. A paper from the Minister for Government Digital Services “Using the CovidCard to improve contact tracing” will be considered by Cabinet on Monday 3 August 2020.
2. On 28 July 2020, the Ministry provided you with talking points to support you in the Cabinet discussion on Monday 3 August 2020 (Health Report 20201271 refers).

Approval of drawdown of tagged contingency funding

3. Government established a contingency fund of \$55 million for COVID-19 Contact Tracing.
4. The paper from the Minister for Government Digital Services asks Cabinet to:
 - a. note that he intends to proceed with the next phase of the CovidCard, including further trials, as part of keeping technology options open to improve contact tracing, subject to funding being made available;
 - b. note that the Government Chief Digital Officer and the Ministry of Health will lead the next phase of work on the CovidCard;
 - c. note that Cabinet would be provided advice following the further trial by the Minister of Health and Minister for Government Digital Services, after the completion of the next phase of work, on whether to proceed with a full national deployment option for CovidCard and alternative options for deployment, or use of other developing technologies; and
 - d. note that the Minister of Health will seek joint Ministerial agreement with the Minister of Finance to draw down \$1.000 million COVID-19 Contact Tracing – Tagged Contingency, to progress the next phase of work on CovidCard.
5. Your approval and that of the Minister of Finance is sought for this drawdown.
6. The Ministry supports the intention to proceed with a further trial of the CovidCard as part of keeping technology options open to improve contact tracing.
7. Uncertainty with the CovidCard reflects that using technology to improve contact tracing is not easy. However, the Minister for Government Digital Services considers the CovidCard should be investigated further as part of looking at multiple technologies to optimise contact tracing capability. The work to be funded by the drawdown is set out in the Cabinet paper as:
 - a. Further closed trials to measure card performance in social settings and get further information about the accuracy of the data collection process.
 - b. An open field trial to determine how the card performs in community settings with real life scenarios and testing end to end use of card, data collection and use in

contact tracing process. Officials are planning for this trial to take place in mid to late September 2020. A tentative site has been identified in the Rotorua region.

- c. Research to test public sentiment to contact tracing technologies.
- d. Further design work into the CovidCard and its link into the contact tracing process.

ENDS.

Proactively released