

Reference: 20250673



14 October 2025

Wendy McGuinness
The McGuinness Institute

Dear Wendy

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act, transferred to the Treasury on 17 September 2025. You requested:

1. ... a copy of the cabinet paper titled 'COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme' that is referred to on p.1 of COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme (dated 15 March 2020)?
2. Can you confirm that the above-named cabinet paper was the first Cabinet paper that set out the initial design of what is now known as the wage subsidy scheme?
3. If earlier Cabinet papers exist that mentions (and possibly describes) the potential wage subsidy for the pandemic, can you provide copies of those papers?
4. Who was involved in the initial development of the wage subsidy scheme prior to the COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme cabinet paper on 15 March 2020?
 - a. What agencies/parties were involved in this early development of the subsidy between 1 February 2020 and 31 March 2020 (e.g. Treasury, MSD, MBIE, and IRD)?
 - b. Can you provide minutes and papers relating to any meetings between any of the parties mentioned directly above over the time period 1 February 2020 to 31 March 2020?
 - c. Can you provide any papers that explored the different job retention options (e.g. the pros and cons)?
5. When was ODESC and the National Crisis Management Centre briefed on the Wage Subsidy Scheme? Please provide a date and any papers MSD provided?
6. Can you provide copies of all cabinet material that relate to all five iterations of

the Wage Subsidy Scheme in the discussion paper: Discussion Paper 2025/02 – How to Tell the Difference Between an Emergency and a Crisis and Why it Matters contains selected cabinet material that MSD has published, but we were after an extensive list and copies so that we can expand on our earlier work.

8. What other measures, instruments or actions (in addition to those in Question 7 above) have been put in place for the next pandemic?

I have decided under section 15A of the Official Information Act to extend the time limit for deciding on your request by an additional 30 working days. The new due date for responding to your request is 27 November 2025.

The extension is required because your request necessitates a search through a large quantity of information, and consultations are needed before a decision can be made on your request.

This extension will also apply to the time limit for transferring your request, should this become relevant.

Notwithstanding this extension, I undertake to decide on your request as soon as reasonably practicable.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review this decision.

Yours sincerely


Manager, Welfare & Oranga Tamariki