

Aide-Mémoire

Information request Fruit in Schools

Due to MO:	10 March 2025	Reference	HNZ00080241
To:	Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Health		
From:	Deborah Woodley, Director Starting Well, Planning Funding and Outcomes		
Security level:	In Confidence	Priority	Routine
Consulted	N/A		

Contact for further discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Phone	1st contact
Deborah Woodley	Director Starting Well	s 9(2)(a)	x
Jason Power	Acting Director Planning, Funding and Outcomes		

Purpose

1. You requested further information on the Fruit in Schools (FIS) programme referred to in HNZ00077469 as part of the Funded Sector Programme Review. You requested information covering:
 - Background on the programme, its value and what it delivers;
 - Existing food in schools programmes;
 - Engagement with stakeholders on the proposal to cease funding FIS;
 - Benefits and risks;
 - Next steps.

Background on the FIS programme

2. The FIS programme has been in place for 20 years, delivering 27,000,000 servings of fresh fruit and vegetables every year into 566 eligible primary schools across New Zealand. This represents 25% of public primary schools. The programme reaches 126,955 students.
3. A wide variety of high-quality fruit and vegetables are delivered once or twice a week, depending on the size of the school roll. The fruit is available in classrooms throughout the school day and access is universal which removes any stigma and encourages healthy eating habits for all students.

FIS programme costs \$9.2 million per annum

4. The FIS programme is funded \$9,188,644 (excl. GST) from the Primary, Community, Public and Population Health appropriation as two contracts:
 - \$8,841,914 (excl. GST) per annum for sourcing and distribution;
 - \$346,729 (excl. GST) per annum for administration and quality control.
5. Five + A day Charitable Trust provides free health promotion and curriculum-linked resources to support lifelong good food habits. Where possible, the FIS programme works with schools to align with curriculum outcomes.

FIS programme is low waste and delivers positive benefits

6. The FIS programme has been regularly evaluated, is efficient with low waste, and delivers positive benefits.
7. Successive evaluation reports have found fewer cases of school sores and skin infections (43% of those surveyed had observed), and strong agreement that if FIS were ended many kids would eat little or no fruit (97% of those surveyed). FIS is likely to also have a positive impact on oral health. Survey participants include principals of eligible schools and facilitators of healthy active learning programmes.

Supplementation and potential duplication of other programmes

8. FIS is supplementary to other food programmes in most schools where it is delivered. 548 out of the 566 schools that receive FIS receive at least one other food in school programme, including:
 - Kick Start Breakfast: jointly funded by Ministry of Social Development and industry (Fonterra and Sanitarium) to help schools provide breakfast in 1,300 schools nationwide, serving over 180,000 breakfasts each school week. These schools use FIS to add fruit to the breakfast items already supplied;
 - Ka Ora, Ka Ako (healthy school lunches): funded by the Ministry of Education and delivered under a mixed delivery model. Full primary, intermediate, composite and secondary schools that have transitioned to the new model from Term 1 2025 are receiving lunches at a reduced cost of \$3 per learner, per day. Most schools now receive a lunch item only and no fruit. The continuation of the FIS programme was a major consideration in the Ministry of Education's recent changes to Ka Ora, Ka Ako as FIS increases the volume and the nutritional quality of the food offered in these schools;
 - KidsCan: privately funded shelf-stable and snack food including canned fruit, pasta, soup, muesli bars and baked beans are ordered and delivered once per term. Schools then distribute this (including the logistics of heating food) to children needing breakfast, lunch or snacks. KidsCan is currently providing some level of food products in 839 schools.
9. Ministry of Education analysis from February 2024 showed 1,672 schools received some food in schools through one of these programmes, and 861 schools had no food provision.
10. The FIS programme predates Ka Ora, Ka Ako. It was introduced in 2005 as a health promotion and cancer prevention initiative as part of the New Zealand Cancer Control Strategy. In 2007, the programme was expanded to all decile 1 Year 1- 8 schools, and in 2015 the programme was expanded again to include all decile 2 Year 1- 8 schools.
11. s 9(2)(g)(i)
 - Since the establishment of Ka Ora, Ka Ako, the Ministry of Education is now the largest provider of food in schools programmes.

Potential impacts to ceasing FIS

12. S9(2)(f)(iv)

S9(2)(f)(iv)

13. S9(2)(f)(iv)

14. S9(2)(f)(iv)

15. S9(2)(f)(iv)

Engagement

16. No external stakeholders have been engaged in the proposal to cease funding the FIS programme.

17. The contracts for the FIS programme expire on 30 June 2025, and the provider is waiting for Health NZ to advise on the status of the contract. Health NZ has had discussions with the provider recently on costings and delivery options when we explored whether a reduced FIS programme to schools not receiving Ka Ora, Ka Ako was a feasible option.

18. S 9(2)(g)(i)

Next steps

19. S9(2)(f)(iv)