

Sensitive and Legally Privileged

Office of the Minister of Education

Cabinet

GREATER CHRISTCHURCH EDUCATION RENEWAL PROCESS

1. I propose that Cabinet notes the decisions I intend to make, in accordance with the Education Act 1989, about which schools in greater Christchurch should close or merge; discusses a draft communications plan on the proposed approach to announcing the decisions; and notes the next steps in the process to support education renewal in the area.

Executive Summary

2. In 2012 Cabinet agreed to a \$1 billion investment in the renewal of education in greater Christchurch over the next ten years to address both pre-existing and earthquake related issues, and, in September I announced the overall plan for education renewal, including proposals for 38 schools to close or merge.
3. Since then, the Ministry has worked with schools to develop plans for education in their local area, and has completed procurement for the new builds at Pegasus and Halswell, and repairs for 18 swimming pools.
4. The schools affected by the proposals were given a longer than usual period to consult with their communities and respond. The thirty one schools asked to provide their feedback on the proposal affecting their school by 7 December 2012 did so. The Ministry of Education established a cross-disciplinary team to thoroughly analyse the submissions and provide detailed advice to me on each of the proposals. Five schools in Aranui will provide their feedback by 7 March 2013. Two schools that sought voluntary closure did so on 27 January 2013.
5. Under the statutory process established by the Education Act 1989, at this stage I need to decide whether schools 'should' close or merge. I will then make a final decision following a further period of consultation. Of the thirteen schools proposed to close, I intend that:
 - five schools should remain open (Burnham, Burnside, Duvauchelle, Okains Bays and Ouruhia Schools);
 - two schools should be the subject of further consultation before a decision is made (Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate Schools); and,
 - six schools should close (Branston Intermediate, Glenmoor, Greenpark, Kendal, Richmond and Shirley Intermediate Schools).
6. Of the nine mergers initially proposed, I intend that:
 - the mergers of Bromley and Linwood Avenue Schools, and Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Schools do not proceed;
 - the merger of TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whānau Tahi does not proceed, but that further consultation is undertaken on which one will relocate to another part of the city; and,

- six should proceed (Burwood and Windsor, Central New Brighton and South New Brighton, Discovery One and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti, Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West, North New Brighton and Freeville, and Phillipstown and Woolston, the last on a different site to that originally proposed).

Table 1: Number of schools affected by proposals

Status	Number
With proposals for closure of merger in September	38
Closed voluntarily in January 2013	2
Consultation period extended until March 2013	5
Considered in this paper	31
Remain open as separate institutions	11
To close	6
Subject to further consultation	2
To merge	12

7. Having carefully read the submissions from each school, and listened to the concerns and ideas of the schools and their communities, I intend not to proceed with more than one third of the original proposals. Accordingly, of the 31 schools covered by this report, I intend to proceed with the proposals for 20 (if the closure of Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate proceeds following further consultation), and to not close or merge 11.
8. I am placing particular importance on communication of the context and wider agenda for education renewal in the greater Christchurch area. These decisions are part of a bigger process to ensure we secure high quality education outcomes for children and young people. To that end, I am ensuring the plan includes a more direct focus on providing parents/caregivers and children with timely access to accurate information about the decisions and what the future holds. The plan has a comprehensive programme that covers pre and post announcement periods and a mixture of delivery mechanisms. I will also ensure regular release of information about other parts of the programme, for example, fixed swimming pools, new schools, design of modern schools and progress in repair work.
9. The communications plan reflects lessons from the September announcements and tries to respect schools' sensitivities. The situation this time is somewhat eased by not having to balance the need of all 215 schools to also be advised at the same time. I have sought advice from the Canterbury Primary Principals Association, the Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools, the Canterbury West Coast Secondary Principals Association on behalf of principals and the NZ School Trustees Association on behalf of Boards of Trustees and I have adopted the advice they have given. I will meet the affected schools on 8 February, to outline and receive feedback on the process for relaying the decisions to them, the next steps and the information and support which will be available.
10. I propose that each of the schools affected is visited and the school leadership is told about decisions by senior Ministry of Education staff on the morning of 18 February. I will also communicate directly with parents/caregivers through a letter, as will the Ministry through the shaping education website, a dedicated phone number, and community meetings. I will make a formal media announcement at 12.00pm, and also invite all Board chairs and Principals to meet with me in the afternoon. Briefings for key stakeholders will be held in the morning with some in Wellington and some in Christchurch. Notwithstanding these efforts, it

is important to be aware that closure or status change of any school is always difficult, and the greater Christchurch communities are continuing to deal with the unique post-quake context. In the end, however, no matter how thoughtfully an unpalatable decision is communicated, it may be difficult for the community to come to terms with.

11. This report also provides an update on wider work on the educational renewal programme for Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri (known as greater Christchurch).

Background

12. Raising student achievement, as reflected in our Better Public Service targets, and ensuring that all young people can access high quality teaching in modern education environments is one of our Government's priorities, as is the rebuild of Christchurch. In this context there is considerable opportunity in Christchurch to provide current and future children with greatly enhanced access to quality education.
13. While the necessary investment in infrastructure provides a platform for promoting access to quality education, I am also focused on enhanced quality of teaching and leadership, both of which are at the heart of student achievement. The concurrent work being done by the 39 geographical groups of schools and early childhood education services to develop and implement plans to maximise achievement is critical. These plans will be developed by the end of June 2013.
14. The earthquakes of 2010-11 caused massive disruption and loss for the people of greater Christchurch. They resulted in unprecedented damage to housing, infrastructure and businesses in the area. There are 1,000 buildings in the CBD that have been assessed as needing to be partially or fully demolished due to earthquake damage.. Approximately 80,000 homes were damaged (around half the housing stock). More than 7,800 properties have been zoned red, which means the land is unsuitable for rebuilding on for a considerable period of time. Those households and families have to leave their homes and rebuild their homes and lives elsewhere. The extent of the damage, subsequent people movement and changes to life in the city means that Christchurch will not be returned to how it was in September 2010. In the same way we will not rebuild the CBD exactly the same, the schooling network needs to adapt to changes in Canterbury. Instead, we have the chance to use the investment to provide better facilities and opportunities for the people of greater Christchurch and future generations.
15. Schools played a crucial role in supporting their children, families and whānau through the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes. While very mindful of the situation many in Christchurch are still working through, I consider we can continue to provide support to children, parents and teachers who need it while at the same time working to provide a significantly improved education environment.
16. The extent of damage to land and buildings, and people movement in the wake of the earthquakes mean that the school network cannot be restored to the way it was in September 2010. There were 5,000 surplus places in the network before the earthquakes, and the July 2012 roll returns from schools show that there are 4,311 fewer children and young people in the system than prior to the earthquakes. There are now over 9,300 surplus places in the network in greater Christchurch – approximately equivalent to the entire student population in Gisborne. Moreover, projected growth for which we are making provision with new schools is not in the same areas.
17. On 13 August 2012, Cabinet agreed to an interim business case seeking to invest in a significant renewal programme for education in the greater Christchurch area over the next ten years [CAB Min (12) 29/3A refers]. This interim business case explained the need to

address earthquake damage and other problems with buildings, respond to population movement and deal with over-capacity that existed prior to the earthquakes. It deliberately looked across the whole school network in greater Christchurch to balance the challenges of repairing earthquake damaged schools, meeting demand and investing to improve education performance.

18. It also set out the opportunity to provide access to high quality modern learning environments through new and improved buildings. These property improvements are planned to encourage collaborative teaching and promote better engagement in learning. Schools in Christchurch will be some of the first in New Zealand to access ultra-fast broadband. Investments in information and communications technology (ICT) can be aligned to ensure that children and young people will be supported by the latest information technology and are able to develop high levels of digital literacy. Shared facilities between schools and with other agencies will allow better access to specialised facilities and services, while delivering benefits for the wider community.
19. On 13 September, I announced the overall plan which is designed to revitalise the schooling network and progress wider education renewal, supported by an investment of up to \$1 billion. As part of this renewal programme, I set out proposals for a series of school closures and mergers affecting 38 of the 215 schools (18% of the total). Of the 71,832 young people attending schools in greater Christchurch, 7,329 attended one of these 38 schools (10.2% of the total)¹.

Table 2: Children in greater Christchurch schools (July 2012 data)

	Children on roll
Total in greater Christchurch schools	71,832
38 schools with proposals in September	7,329
31 schools considered in this paper	5,452
Total in 20 affected schools	4,034
12 schools proposed to merge	3,140
8 schools proposed to close / further consultation about closure	894
6 schools proposed to close	618
2 schools subject to further consultation	276

Table 3: FTTE in greater Christchurch schools (March 2012 data based on entitlement staffing; includes state and state integrated schools)

	FTTE
Total in greater Christchurch schools	3623.1
38 schools with proposals in September	408.5
31 schools considered in this paper	303.5
Total in 20 affected schools	225.1
12 schools proposed to merge	169.2
Projected staffing in the 6 newly merged schools	163.0
Difference in staffing as a result of the mergers	-6.2
8 schools proposed to close / further consultation about closure	55.9

¹ These figures, and later references, refer to July 2012 rolls

6 schools proposed to close	36.9
2 schools subject to further consultation	19.0

The above projection assumes all children in the 12 merging schools attend the 6 merged schools, and that technology provision continues in Phillipstown / Woolston.

20. These proposals were only part of the investment in infrastructure which we are making in schools in greater Christchurch. There are currently two new schools in progress (Pegasus and Halswell). We are also planning for additional provision over the next ten years in the following areas: Lincoln, Rangiora West, Rolleston and West Halswell. Nine schools will relocate to new sites if the decisions signalled in this paper proceed. The repair and rebuild programme will include significant new building at 30 existing schools, particularly where mergers occur. Eighteen swimming pools have been repaired to allow use during 2013, and work is underway on the remaining five. This is presented in the table below.

Table 4: Additional schools and proposed relocations

	Before Decisions	After Decisions
New Schools in progress ²	2	2
New schools within 10 years due to demographic growth	6 ³	4 ⁴
Relocated schools that a new builds new location	6 ⁵	9 ⁶

21. The wider education renewal programme organised the 215 schools in the greater Christchurch area (Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri districts) into 39 groups of schools. These geographical groups – which also include early childhood education (ECE) centres – are designed to encourage and allow local schools and ECE services to work together to develop plans that are innovative, collaborative, and optimise investment of resources to improve the quality of education they are able to offer, particularly for our priority children and young people. We also established additional specialist groups to consider secondary education, special education, Māori medium and technology provision across greater Christchurch.
22. In November, I updated Cabinet on progress and agreed to provide a further update [CAB Min (12) 40/11 refers]. The Ministry's focus has been on:
- supporting the consultation process for schools with a proposal for closure or merger, then analysing schools' responses and providing comprehensive advice to me;
 - continuing to work with groups of schools and ECE providers to develop their planning, and considering what additional support may be needed to promote educational renewal; and,
 - extending its communications work to ensure stronger engagement with the community around the opportunities available through the education renewal programme.

² Pegasus and Halswell.

³ Lincoln, Rangiora West, Rolleston (secondary), West Halswell, West Belfast, Rolleston (primary).

⁴ Lincoln, Rangiora West, Rolleston (secondary), West Halswell.

⁵ Banks Ave, Linwood College, Marshland, Sockburn, South Hornby, Unlimited/Discovery.

⁶ Banks Ave, Linwood College, Marshland, Sockburn, South Hornby, Unlimited/Discovery and Burnham to Rolleston, Ouruhia to West Belfast, one of the Kura to an appropriate area that increases access.

Consultation with schools for closure or merger

23. On 13 September 2012, I announced specific proposals for 38 schools to close or merge:
- 13 schools were proposed to close with their learners being accommodated elsewhere in the network;
 - 18 schools were proposed to merge to create 9 schools;
 - 5 schools in Aranui were proposed to close and a year 1-13 campus to be formed on an as yet undetermined site; and,
 - 2 schools in Akaroa were proposed to close and become part of the Akaroa Area School, whilst continuing to operate on their existing sites.
24. The school closure and merger process is governed by sections 154, 156A and 157 of the Education Act 1989 (the Act). These sections require the Minister of Education to consult the Board of the school concerned and the Boards of any state schools where the roll might be affected before making an initial decision to close or merge a school. The Minister then gives the Board of the school proposed for **closure** 28 days in which to provide any further arguments or information in favour of the decision not proceeding. I intend to provide the same opportunity to Boards where schools have a proposed **merger**.
25. On 28 September 2012, I wrote to the Board chair of each of the 38 schools, copied to the Principal, and Ministry staff hand delivered each letter to the affected school. The letter initiated the formal consultation phase set out by the Education Act 1989. It also outlined the timetable for the process, with schools having 10 weeks until 7 December 2012 to return their feedback on the proposals to the Ministry of Education. This was a longer than usual timeframe for consultation and reflected my recognition of the unique situation in which these changes were proposed. Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay Schools had previously requested voluntary closure at the beginning of 2013, so they were given a shorter deadline of 26 October. These schools closed on 27 January 2013. The Ministry also consulted 70 Boards of schools whose rolls may be affected if the proposals are to go ahead.
26. In further recognition of the unique circumstances in greater Christchurch a number of additional supports were put in place. These included:
- providing schools with \$5,000 to appoint an independent facilitator to gather information, coordinate community consultation and draft the school's submission;
 - an 0.2 relief teacher per school allowing a staff member a day per week to focus on the process;
 - a Teachers Only Day; and,
 - establishing an online digital community forum to facilitate greater participation.
27. In addition, the Ministry established a dedicated taskforce, appointed a sector facing specialist advisor (Trevor McIntyre, who stepped down from his position as Headmaster of Christchurch Boys High School), and facilitated the establishment of three community based advisory groups to oversee the educational renewal programme, Māori and Pasifika involvement and interests. I also appointed a Ministerial Advisor, Karen Sewell (former Secretary of Education, Chief Review Officer, and Chief Executive of the NZ Qualifications Authority) to maintain relationships and communications directly with schools.
28. After the school holidays, on 12 October, the Ministry provided each school with a detailed rationale for the proposal affecting them. This included information about each school's land and buildings issues (and an indicative cost to remediate them), as well as updated

information about school rolls based on new July 2012 enrolment data and local population changes. The Ministry offered to meet all affected schools to discuss the rationale, and clarify any of the information provided. This included arranging meetings with the engineers who had undertaken the land and buildings assessments at each school.

29. On 16 October, I wrote to the Boards of the 36 schools⁷ offering to meet them and their communities to directly hear their concerns and feedback. Thirty-five Boards accepted my invitation (North New Brighton did not), and I visited each of the schools in late October and early November 2012. Individual boards determined how the meetings would run, and in some cases over 100 parents and other interested people attended. Principals and/or teachers spoke at every meeting. Overall, over 2,000 people attended the meetings.
30. I was able to hear first-hand from parents, Principals, teachers and other staff about the impact that the earthquakes have had and are continuing to have on them, their children and the wider community. A wide range of views were expressed, and it was clear that a number of Boards had been giving serious thought to alternative proposals. A small number of Boards asked for an extension to the consultation process to allow their communities more time to consider the issues. However, this was not a widespread request, and some schools specifically asked to maintain the proposed timetable. Given the complexity of the proposal for Aranui, I extended the consultation period for those five schools until 7 March 2013.
31. The remaining 31 schools all submitted their responses by the deadline of 7 December 2012. On 14 December, the Ministry provided me with a copy of each submission, including all the material the Boards used to support their analysis and proposals.
32. The Ministry established a cross-disciplinary team to thoroughly analyse all submissions. This team included staff members with substantial experience of working directly with schools in greater Christchurch. Additional expertise was brought in from property, the school network, and early childhood education teams. Where necessary, this team commissioned and considered additional data about demographics and the local school network, as well as property and financial information. It drew on information from the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy, which has been developed by Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, the New Zealand Transport Agency and Ngāi Tahu. This allowed an informed consideration about all the options which Boards had raised.
33. The Ministry's legal advisers have been involved throughout this period to ensure that the analysis and process were robust and met the Ministry's responsibilities under the Act. They also reviewed draft education reports about the individual proposals. Additional independent legal advice has also been provided about the quality of the consultation process and the subsequent analysis.
34. On 22 January 2013, the Ministry provided me with a detailed education report for each proposal. I have been carefully considering the case for each school, while ensuring that I consider the impact of the proposals more widely and the viability of the school network in greater Christchurch overall. The Ministry's reports carefully consider each argument and proposal which have been made by Boards in their submissions, and set out the Ministry's response and final recommendation. They include the Ministry's analysis of the effect of proposals on children's access to school provision, and the financial and property implications of different options. Before being submitted, each report was considered by a governance group consisting of senior officials from Christchurch and Wellington, and the final report was signed off by the Deputy Secretary, Regional Operations. I have

⁷ Excluding Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay Schools.

subsequently had meetings with officials to carefully consider the analysis and recommendations, as well as commissioning further detailed advice about aspects of provision in greater Christchurch.

35. Alongside the education reports on each of the proposals, the Ministry provided me with an overall report about the proposals. This report examined the evidence on the quality of education in middle and intermediate schools and small schools. Although not required, I had invited submissions from the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB), the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA), New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) and other interested bodies to ensure the voices of significant stakeholders have been heard. The Ministry's report includes analysis of these submissions. It provided me with advice on the implications of the proposals on the overall provision of high-quality early childhood education, Māori medium, special education and technology provision. It set out how the Ministry will support schools through the closure and merger process.
36. Following my discussion with officials, I sought further information on the provision of Māori medium education in greater Christchurch, technology provision and likely school rolls as a result of decisions. I received this information on 25 January 2013.
37. It is important that parents/caregivers and schools are able in a timely way to see the information I considered when making decisions and, learning from the September announcement, I intend to publish all the education reports on the website dedicated to Christchurch Education Renewal – shaping education, at the same time as I announce my decisions.

Decisions about individual proposals

38. As set out by the Act, decisions about school closures and mergers are the responsibility of the Minister of Education. At this stage of the process, the Act requires that I make decisions about whether schools 'should' close, followed by final decisions about whether they 'will' close after Boards have had 28 days to provide further feedback by 22 March. I will follow the same process for schools proposed to merge. My thinking about the schools which should close and merge is set out in a table as Appendix 1. Maps showing provision before the earthquakes and the effects of my intended decisions are included as Appendix 2. The individual school reports prepared by the Ministry are also available.
39. Of the 13 schools proposed for outright closure, Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay Schools have already closed. Following consideration of the detailed education reports on each of the individual proposals, my intended decision is that six should close as originally planned. They are:
 - **Branston Intermediate School**
 - **Glenmoor School**
 - **Greenpark School**
 - **Kendal School**
 - **Richmond School**
 - **Shirley Intermediate School**
40. There are three schools that I am proposing not proceed with closure:
 - **Ouruhia Model School** – the Board of Ouruhia Model School has proposed in its submission that the school should remain open in order to reduce the pressure on Belfast School and the relocated Marshland School. My original proposal was for future population growth in Belfast to be accommodated through a satellite of Belfast School. Ouruhia is not

essential in the network where it is currently located, but I intend that it is retained and then relocated to serve population growth in Belfast at the appropriate time in the future.

- **Burnside School** – the Board of Burnside School developed a proposal to rebuild the school with a modern learning environment, combined with a community education hub and shared facilities with Cobham Intermediate School. This provides the opportunity for a strong collaborative approach between Burnside School, Cobham Intermediate School and Burnside High School. Cobham Intermediate also requires considerable investment, so the opportunity for shared facilities is considerable. This model of three schools working together presents a valuable opportunity for the future to test a different way of managing Year 1-13 education. There was evidence of strong support for the proposals from across the cluster. The Ministry would work with other agencies to consider co-locating health and other services on the site. I am also mindful of the particular group of refugee and immigrant children Burnside serves and consider that this proposal offers an opportunity to develop innovative and collaborative practices to support their diverse needs.
 - **Burnham School** – the Board of Burnham School set out their school's role in meeting the particular needs of the large number of children whose parents serve in the New Zealand Defence Force, and suggested that its roll may grow due to future increases in population in Rolleston. While I am persuaded that there is a distinctive defence community to be served and supported, most of the growth is in other parts of the town and the high cost of rebuilding and repairing the buildings on the current site is prohibitive. I intend to retain Burnham in the network, explore with the Board and its community how its distinctive defence features can be reflected and respected, and relocate it so that it can better serve the areas of Rolleston with a rapidly growing population which includes much of the defence establishment, as well as its existing population.
41. I proposed that **Duvauchelle** and **Okains Bay Schools** would close but remain on their sites as satellites of Akaroa Area School. My intended decision is not to proceed with this. Instead I intend to ask the Ministry to work with both Duvauchelle and Okains Bay schools to develop extended collaboration, including considering shared governance arrangements. This offers the opportunity of achieving the original rationale of better access to high-quality education provision for local children, without having to implement closure processes.
42. I propose a further period of consultation before making a decision about **Linwood Intermediate** and **Manning Intermediate Schools**. My initial proposal was that both schools should close, and local primary schools should extend their provision to accommodate Year 7 and 8 learners. I have not seen any evidence to make me change the proposal for the schools to close, but the consultation did indicate that there may be support in the community for providing Year 7 and 8 education as part of local secondary schools (Linwood College and Hillmorton High School respectively). Evidence shows that the needs of Year 7 and 8 learners can be successfully met in a range of settings, so I have therefore decided to consult the Boards of the local secondary and primary schools to allow the community to consider the pattern of provision they would prefer in the event of the intermediate schools closing. Following this consultation, I will make a decision on whether the two intermediate schools should close.
43. Of the nine proposed mergers, my intended decision is that six should proceed. They are:
- **Burwood** and **Windsor Schools**
 - **Central New Brighton** and **South New Brighton Schools**
 - **Lyttelton Main** and **Lyttelton West Schools**
 - **North New Brighton** and **Freeville Schools**
 - **Phillipstown** and **Woolston Schools** (but using the Woolston site)

- **Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One Schools**

44. Both the Boards of Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One agreed to the merger, so that will be my final decision about them.
45. Following consideration of the Boards' submissions and the Ministry's education reports, I intend to decide not to proceed with three mergers. They are:
- **Bromley and Linwood Avenue Schools** – my intended decision is that both schools should remain open;
 - **Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Schools** – my intended decision is that both schools should remain open; and,
 - **TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whānau Tahi** – my intended decision is that both kura should remain open, but one should relocate to a site on the other side of the city.
46. The changes to the proposals for **Phillipstown and Woolston Schools**, and **Linwood Avenue and Bromley Schools** reflect the complex and interrelated issues across Learning Community Clusters in the east of the city. My initial proposals responded to the oversupply of primary school places in the area, and the fact that the damage to school land and buildings is some of the most significant in the city.
47. I proposed that Woolston and Phillipstown Schools merge on the Linwood College site. In their submission, Phillipstown did not agree. In their submission, Woolston proposed that Phillipstown and Bamford Schools should close, with most of their current children switching to Woolston. One significant advantage of Woolston's proposal is that it would create a local education hub. This would include the new primary school, the relocated Linwood College and its Teen Parent Unit. This hub could also include an expansion of the existing bilingual provision, hosting technology provision and exploring a co-located early childhood education centre. The proposal also includes collaborating with the City Council and CDHB to develop other community facilities on the site. The idea of a hub has the potential to radically improve the provision of education for some of the communities in greater Christchurch that have been most affected by the earthquakes.
48. I do not agree with the Woolston submission that Phillipstown should close rather than merge. For this to be a partnership between two schools to support all the children in the community, I consider it would be better for the schools to merge. I propose that the schools would merge at the beginning of 2014, ahead of the necessary work to improve and expand buildings on the Woolston site to allow the appointed Board to develop a vision for the merged school. I do not agree that Bamford School should be included in the proposal as it meets needs in the network.
49. Taking this alternative proposal has significant implications for the proposed merger of Linwood Avenue and Bromley schools. One of the most important reasons for that proposed merger was that the current Linwood Avenue site is just 1km away from Linwood College, which was the proposed site for the merger of Phillipstown and Woolston Schools. Under the revised proposal, provision at the Linwood Avenue, Bromley and Woolston sites, retains good access to primary schools for all families in the Linwood cluster.
50. Having considered the feedback from the Boards of **Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Schools**, I propose both schools should remain open. As set out in the original rationale, Gilberthorpe is situated in an area with the potential for population growth, and needs significant investment in its buildings. As it is redeveloped and has the potential to grow, Yaldhurst is needed in the network to release over-crowding pressures whilst new patterns of enrolment are established.

51. When I proposed the merger of **TKKM o Waitaha** and **TKKM o Te Whānau Tahī**, I wanted the community to explore options to enhance the quality, quantum, and accessibility of Māori medium provision across greater Christchurch. The submissions from the kura contain innovative ideas about easing the transition between full immersion and other levels of Māori medium provision. The submission from Te Rūnanganui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori also emphasises its support for increased and accessible provision, and more strategic linkages with kōhanga reo. The Ministry is working with Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui to enhance quality and access to Māori language in education.
52. The Ministry's analysis of Māori medium provision clearly shows an inequity of access, with little provision north of the city centre (including in the Papanui, Burnside and Parklands Learning Community Clusters, which have relatively high numbers of Māori students). The original plan responded to this by proposing merging the two existing kura in the south and developing new provision in the north. However, I now propose that both kura are retained in the network, but that there is a further period of consultation about which one should be relocated in order to provide better access. This will be supplemented by other decisions made about ongoing provision through units located in other mainstream schools. I will invite views from the Māori medium learning cluster and the Waitaha Advisory Board-Mātauraka Mahaanui.
53. Of the 71,832 young people attending schools in greater Christchurch, 5,452 attend the 31 schools being considered at this stage. The total roll of the 20 schools proposed for merger or closure is 4,034, which is 5.6% of the total. Of these, 894 children attend schools proposed for closure: 1.2% of the total roll of greater Christchurch schools.

Progress on developing plans for geographical groups of schools

54. Each of the 39 geographical groups of schools has begun their work to develop a comprehensive plan to raise student achievement across their schools, and through ECE. These plans will reflect the different starting points of the schools, as well as the different needs of local children and young people. I expect that there will be a strong emphasis on raising participation and achievement of priority children and young people, and supporting transitions between schools. The Ministry has received outline plans from almost half of the groups, and will continue to work with all groups to develop their plans by mid-2013.
55. The Ministry is also working with the secondary schools group which has a funded facilitator and has been meeting regularly since September to develop proposals for the future of secondary provision in greater Christchurch. Secondary schools have also suffered damage to their land and buildings, and been affected by population movements. There is a surplus of around 1,300 places in the state secondary school network, and long-term projections suggest that demand for places is unlikely to increase significantly. The situation is complicated by the fact that three secondary schools – Avonside Girls' High, Christchurch Girls' High, and Shirley Boys' High – suffered some of the most severe earthquake damage, and have needed detailed geotechnical assessments of their sites. The Ministry will continue to work with the group to develop options for the future of the secondary network, including how schools might extend collaboration to improve student achievement. I expect to be able to discuss these options with Cabinet in mid-2013.
56. The geographical groups of schools plans will consider how capital investment might be used across each group, including the possibility of sharing facilities across schools and with the wider community. As such, they will form a critical part of the information needed to make robust decisions about the \$1 billion investment in greater Christchurch over the next ten years. I therefore propose that Cabinet's consideration of a full business case for this investment is delayed from February [CAB Min (12) 29/3A refers] until August 2013, when

we will have this information, as well as a full understanding of the implications of decisions on school mergers and closures. By then, I will also have received geotechnical assessments for Kaiapoi Borough School and Redcliffs School, two primary schools where further work is needed to assess the long-term viability of their sites.

57. We expect all groups of schools to consider how technology provision can best be delivered. It may be that rather than continue with traditional patterns of provision, some clusters may wish to consider how technology can be better integrated across the curriculum, or to work more closely with local secondary schools. I recognise that parents need certainty that appropriate provision will be available in the short term. Of the 26 schools in greater Christchurch which provide technology provision for Year 7 and 8 learners, five are affected by the current proposals (Phillipstown, Branston Intermediate, Linwood Intermediate, Manning Intermediate and Shirley Intermediate).
58. I propose that the extensive existing provision on the Phillipstown site (which caters for more than 1,300 children) is maintained in the short term, and managed by the Board and Principal of the newly merged school. There is already a successful example of a Board of Trustees in Canterbury managing off-site technology provision. Technology provision at the intermediate schools is able to move to the local secondary schools until Learning Community Clusters have developed and implemented longer term plans.
59. Geographical groups of schools are also considering how they can develop more inclusive practices to properly support children and young people with special education needs. I am no longer proposing the merger of Bromley School with Linwood Avenue School, so only one school which has satellite provision for children enrolled at a special schools is affected by the proposals. This is Glenmoor School, which is hosting seven children this year. The Ministry will work with the school to ensure that these students are able to have a successful transition to new provision from January 2014.

Communications with schools and the wider community

60. As noted in the November 2012 paper, the Ministry of Education has continued to step up its communications and engagement with schools and the community. Karen Sewell has been working as a conduit between schools with a proposal for closure or merger and myself and officials in the Ministry of Education. She has been involved at a governance level in the process of analysing submissions and developing recommendations, and I have discussed the recommendations with her. Trevor McIntyre has stepped down from Headmaster of Christchurch Boys' High School and has been appointed as an Education Renewal Advisor to the Ministry.
61. Learning from the September 2012 announcement, communications about this announcement – and later final decisions – will be done within the overall context of the wider plan for Education Renewal in the greater Christchurch area. This includes an increased focus on ensuring that parents/caregivers, are carefully informed about decisions about their options for the future education of their children. The plan ensures that parents/caregivers will have access to timely and comprehensive information through a variety of mechanisms, letter, website, paid advertisements, media interviews, a dedicated phone and community meetings. There will be communication activity directed at parents/caregivers in the week leading up to the announcement advising them to expect to receive information.
62. I recognise that the proposed changes have been difficult for children, parents/caregivers, school staff and the wider community, and I want to ensure that we do everything possible to support them through the announcement and the process afterwards. Ministry officials have discussed the options for relaying decisions with the Canterbury Primary Principals

Association (CPPA), the Association of Intermediate and Middle Schools, the Canterbury West Coast Secondary Principals Associations, and the NZ School Trustees Association and I have adopted their preferred approach.

63. On 8 February 2013, I will hold meetings with the Board chairs and Principals of all 31 schools to outline what the proposed process for the announcements will be and the information they will receive on the day. Given the positive feedback the Ministry has received from the Principals' associations, I expect that school leadership will be supportive of the proposed approach, but this will provide an opportunity to amend the plans or strengthen the planned support for the announcement in line with any feedback. I will also explain what the next steps would be if the decision is to close or merge the school, and the additional support which will be available.
64. On the morning of 18 February 2013, senior staff from the Ministry will visit each school to deliver and discuss my initial decision with the Board chair and the Principal, provide the full information pack and the material which supported the decision, and detailed information about the next steps and timescales, including the support which the Ministry will be making available. The school leadership will be offered a follow-up visit in the next 48 hours to go through the information in more detail, once they have had the opportunity to talk to their communities.
65. I intend to invite all Board Chairs and Principals to meet me later on the same day. They will already know the decisions at this stage, but the purpose of the meeting is to give them the opportunity to discuss them. Briefings of key stakeholder groups will also occur on the day and I will hold a press conference and release the full list of decisions and supporting material. The press conference will occur at 12.00pm.
66. On 19 and 20 February 2013, senior staff from the Ministry will meet with a wider group of stakeholders, including representatives from the early childhood education sector, the business community and Canterbury government leaders. These meetings will provide stakeholders with information about the next steps and timescales, including the support which the Ministry will be making available to parents/caregivers and schools.
67. The Ministry will run a series of post-announcement community meetings. This will provide an opportunity for parents/caregivers to hear directly from the Ministry and have their queries dealt with.
68. I want to be as open and transparent as possible about the decision-making process, the advice I received from the Ministry and the factors they considered. To support this, when schools are notified of the decision on 18 February, they will receive a copy of the education report relating to their school. The education report which contained the overall advice to me will be emailed to each school immediately after the last school visit occurs. These education reports, as well as the detailed information packs which schools will receive, will be publicly released on the same day and will be available on the website from the announcement time of 12.00pm.
69. I acknowledge that in choosing to inform schools about decisions before the media, it is likely that some will inform the media about the decision relating to their own school or that the information they share with their community may enter the public arena and be communicated by the media. However, I believe that this option is fair to schools' staff and their wider communities. The Ministry's discussions with the Principals' associations indicate that this option will attract the widest support from schools. I am relying on this professional advice to ensure that we do not have a repeat of the criticisms of the September announcements.

Next steps

70. As set out above, the Education Act requires a further period of consultation where I have decided that a school should close, and I have decided to provide the same opportunity where I have decided that schools should merge. The Boards of the six schools that I intend to decide should close⁸ and the ten schools that I intend to decide should merge⁹ will have until 22 March to provide any additional information to me. I will discuss my final decisions with Cabinet before making an announcement on 13 May.
71. I intend to provide a longer period for the consultations about the provision of Year 7 and Year 8 education should Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate Schools close, and the relocations of Burnham School and one of the kura. I will ask Boards to provide their feedback on these proposals by 5 April. This will allow me to make an announcement on 13 May, alongside final decisions on the other mergers and closures.
72. In the event that I decide that one or both of Linwood Intermediate and Manning Intermediate Schools should close, the Education Act requires that their Boards have a further period to provide additional information. This period would run until 10 June, allowing me to discuss my final decision with Cabinet before making an announcement by the end of term 2 (12 July).
73. The Boards of the five schools in the Aranui Learning Community Cluster have until 7 March to return their submissions. I expect to make an announcement about these schools before the end of term 1 (19 April). If it is proposed that the closures should continue or that we progress alternative proposals, there will be a further consultation with the Boards.
74. I recognise that school Boards and staff will need a range of additional support throughout what will inevitably be a difficult period. The Ministry will appoint a change manager to support the Boards of schools which are closing or merging, helping to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in existing schools, whilst ensuring a smooth transition to the new schools. The Ministry also appoints a residual agent, who has a key role in ensuring that Boards continue to effectively and prudently manage public funds throughout the process. The Ministry's response teams will continue to provide tailored programmes to support the well-being of children, parents and staff.
75. When the initial proposals were made in September, schools were provided with an indicative timeline for implementation. However, where schools are scheduled to close or merge, I believe it is better that this is done quickly to provide certainty for children, parents, staff and the wider community. For closures, this prevents slow roll decline and the possibility that many of the staff will choose to move to other schools over this period. For mergers, it allows an appointed Board of Trustees to start considering the needs of the whole school community, and to manage its resources and staff appropriately. Where the merged school will have new buildings, it allows the Board and senior leadership team to be involved in their design to ensure it meets their needs.
76. I have therefore asked the Ministry to prioritise property work to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for students who move school as a result of closures, and that new buildings are progressed as quickly as possible for affected schools. This means that we have been able to bring forward the implementation date for the majority of closures and mergers to January 2014, allowing a much greater degree of certainty in those schools

⁸ Branston Intermediate, Glenmoor, Greenpark, Kendal, Richmond and Shirley Intermediate Schools

⁹ Burwood and Windsor Schools, Central New Brighton and South New Brighton Schools, Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools, North New Brighton and Freeville Schools, and Phillipstown and Woolston Schools. Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One Schools have already agreed to merge

most affected. The schools will effectively close at the end of term 4 in December 2013, but they remain open legally to allow staff to be paid during the holiday, as set out in the collective agreements. This earlier timescale also supports developing momentum for the overall recovery of greater Christchurch.

77. As set out above, this work is only part of the investment in infrastructure which we are making in schools in greater Christchurch. In addition to the proposals for the 38 schools, over the next ten years we will be providing four entirely new schools to meet additional demand for schooling in areas of population growth. Procurement has already been completed for the new builds at Pegasus and Halswell, and the schools will be ready for occupation in 2014. My initial proposals also envisaged new primary provision in Rolleston and west Belfast, but as discussed above, this demand will be met by relocating Burnham and Ouruhia Model Schools. I am also proposing relocating one of the kura and finding a new site for the merger of Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One, resulting in a total of nine relocations. There is potential for more new school buildings, depending on decisions on Aranui, the secondary network and as a result of additional geotechnical information.
78. The Ministry is developing a full work programme to prioritise and sequence the building renewal programme for all schools, but has already prioritised rebuilding and repair work on 30 schools over the next 2-4 years. Design work for some of these schools will begin in April.
79. The capital requirement for this work is dependent on the timing and quantum of the Ministry's insurance settlement in relation to the Canterbury earthquakes. It is anticipated that capital requirements for 2013 and 2014 will be able to be met from this settlement, once the funds are available. The Ministry will work with the Treasury to highlight and address any capital requirements for projects prior to the insurance settlement being finalised, and I expect to submit a Budget 2013 bid to cover any immediate requirement for capital funding.
80. Environment Canterbury is leading multi-agency work (with CERA and the greater Christchurch territorial authorities) to develop a draft Land Use Recovery Plan, which will consider appropriate locations for residential areas and therefore school populations. The Plan may also have direct implications for some schools, especially those close to or adjacent to existing red zones. Further changes to the school network may need to be considered as a result of this.

Consultation

81. The Treasury, the State Services Commission and the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency have been consulted on this paper, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has been informed of its content.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1 **note** that I continue to be mindful of the significant impact of the earthquake on children, parents, school staff and the wider community in greater Christchurch, and I am committed to ensuring appropriate support continues to be provided to students, their parents and teachers as the closure and merger process continues;
- 2 **note** the process of consultation which I have undertaken with the 38 schools in greater Christchurch proposed for closure or merger;
- 3 **note** that I intend to decide:
 - 3.1 that Burnham School, Burnside School, Duvauchelle School, Okains Bay School, and Ourhuia Model School, should remain open;
 - 3.2 that further consultation should be undertaken on Year 7 and 8 provision before a decision is made about Linwood Intermediate School and Manning Intermediate School; and,
 - 3.3 that Branston Intermediate School, Glenmoor School, Greenpark School, Kendal School, Richmond School, and Shirley Intermediate School should close;
- 4 **note** that I intend to decide:
 - 4.1 that the mergers of Bromley and Linwood Avenue Schools, and Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Schools do not proceed;
 - 4.2 that the merger of TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM of Te Whānau Tahī does not proceed, but that further consultation is undertaken about the relocation of one of the kura; and,
 - 4.3 that Burwood and Windsor Schools, Central New Brighton and South New Brighton Schools, Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools, North New Brighton and Freeville Schools and Phillipstown and Woolston Schools should merge; and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One Schools will merge;
- 5 **note** that of the 31 schools considered for closure or merger at this stage, I intend to proceed with 20, and not to close or merge 11;
- 6 **note** that the 28 days of further consultation required by the Act will conclude on 22 March, with final decisions being announced on 13 May;
- 7 **note** the timelines for further consultation, future decisions and announcements and that I will be working to rationalise the number of announcements in the coming months;
- 8 **agree** that Cabinet consideration of the full business case should now take place in August 2013;
- 9 **note** that the capital requirement for the Education Renewal Process is dependent on the Ministry's insurance settlement and the Ministry of Education will prepare a Budget 2013 bid to address any immediate capital requirement;

- 10 **note** that Environment Canterbury is leading work on a draft Land Use Recovery Plan, and that this may have implications for the school network; and
- 11 **note** that a draft communications plan has been developed, relying on advice from local professional organisations and the schools themselves, giving full consideration to the manner in which affected schools are informed about decisions, and provides transparency about the decision-making process.

Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education

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