



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Carmel Sepuloni	Portfolio	Auckland
Title of Cabinet paper	Proposal to fund community safety initiatives for the Auckland city centre	Date to be published	2 October 2023

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
August 2023	Proposal to fund community safety initiatives for the Auckland city centre	Office of Minister for Auckland
21 August 2023	CAB-23-MIN-0384 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES / NO *(please select)*

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Office of the Minister for Auckland

Office of the Minister of Justice

Cabinet

Proposal to fund community safety initiatives for the Auckland city centre

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks approval to:
 - 1.1 establish a new appropriation within Vote Business, Science and Innovation (BSI) to support the Minister for Auckland's proposals to implement community safety initiatives in the Auckland city centre.
 - 1.2 drawdown \$100,000 in funding from the 'Proceeds of Crime Fund' (established for purposes including addressing crime-related harm to communities and improving community wellbeing) to the new Vote BSI appropriation.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 The proposals in this paper support the Government's focus on community safety and ensuring less offending and fewer victims of crime. They also support the priorities of both the Minister of Justice and Minister for Auckland.

Executive Summary

- 3 In discussions with business and community groups, we have received feedback about low levels and poor perception of safety in Auckland's city centre. Improving community safety in the Auckland city centre would support greater vibrancy and economic activity in the area, supporting the recovery from COVID-19 and adverse weather-related impacts.
- 4 To complement ongoing efforts by the Police, we propose creating four Safety Hubs across Auckland City Centre to act as a base from which patrols of community warden groups in the city centre will be coordinated – enabling a more effective presence in the city centre of safety personnel. These Hubs will also provide a range of support services for local communities. This will be complemented by a new administrative base for the Akarana Māori Wardens at one of the Safety Hub sites. This will build on the ongoing work by the temporary Safety Hub at Queens Wharf (due to end on 20 August 2023).
- 5 We are seeking \$100,000 to fund the creation of the four Safety Hubs and the administrative base, with funds drawn from the Proceeds of Crime Fund and placed in a new Vote BSI appropriation limited to delivering initiatives to support improvements to community safety in the Auckland region.

- 6 If approved, MBIE will immediately finalise discussions with Community Patrols New Zealand (CPNZ) on the continuation of the current Safety Hub at Queens Wharf. Furthermore, MBIE will work with CPNZ on procurement and refurbishment of the remaining three sites, alongside working with other departments and community warden groups on the operational functions and management of the Safety Hubs.

Background

Stakeholders have voiced concerns about safety in the Auckland City Centre

- 7 Various stakeholders, including residents and the business community, have expressed concern regarding issues of community safety in Auckland's city centre and the associated negative impact on business activity and wellbeing for residents, workers, and visitors.

Police and businesses have taken action to address safety concerns

- 8 We have heard requests from various stakeholders to increase Police presence in the central city. Police advise that they have significantly increased the numbers of foot patrols in Auckland's city centre over the past 12 months. There were 1,272 foot patrols in 2022 across the Auckland central area versus 4,363 foot patrols in the same period for 2023. This equates to a 243% increase. Police also established a Beat Deployment Base at 210 Federal Street in September 2022. This Base has aided efficiency of deploying personnel and assisted in generating an increase in Police foot patrols in Auckland city. Notwithstanding this increase, there remains concern amongst Auckland's city centre residents and businesses that city centre safety is deteriorating.
- 9 Business associations have funded private security measures in addition to advocating for increased Police presence. We are informed that Auckland city centre's business association, Heart of the City (HOTC), spent \$620,000 in the year ending June 2023 on private security to mitigate theft, burglary and assaults. The Newmarket Business Association also spent \$500,000 on security in the year to July 2023. CityWatch Auckland members are also supported by Police to attend to instances of public nuisance and damage to public assets, and to monitor busking and illegal dumping.

Community patrol groups can complement Police efforts to improve city safety

- 10 Community patrol groups, including volunteer warden groups, are willing to play a more visible role in Auckland's city safety network, complementing the work of the Police and other safety initiatives such as those funded by business associations.
- 11 Māori, Pacific and Ethnic wardens are volunteers that work to support social cohesion and safety through high visibility prevention patrols, crowd management, community reassurance and broader community safety support. While they do not have policing powers, their cultural capability, responsiveness and independence from Police allows them to build and

maintain trusted relationships with the communities they support. Police have commented positively on the ability for these warden groups to support the Police's goals of public safety and wellbeing.

- 12 The different warden groups work independently from each other, however, there are opportunities to support collaboration between the groups in Auckland city centre to support community safety. The groups have previously come together to support major events such as the Rugby World Cup and large-scale cultural events.
- 13 The types of tasks that wardens perform can vary according to their legal mandate. Their tasks can include street patrols, traffic management, presence on public transport, support for major events and a range of other welfare and community support roles.

A temporary Safety Hub was created at Queen's Wharf during the World Cup

- 14 Between 20 July and 20 August 2023, a pop-up Safety Hub was established at Queens Wharf to coincide with the FIFA Women's World Cup and other events on in Auckland city. The Hub is a joint initiative between HOTC and CPNZ.
- 15 During its operating hours, CPNZ volunteers use the Safety Hub as a base from which to coordinate CPNZ patrols in the city. The Hub also provides a safe space for people to go if they need help or support. Staff at the Hub offer a range of services, including helping people get home safely, providing first aid if someone is injured, connecting people in need with emergency services, and providing information.
- 16 While it is too early to evaluate the performance of the Safety Hub, we have heard positive feedback on this initiative from members of the business community, particularly the Tāmaki Makaurau Business Network. HOTC, Auckland Council and Community warden groups have also voiced their support for the continuation of the Safety Hub.

Improving city centre safety in Auckland

- 17 Strengthening city centre safety involves multiple stakeholders and is a complex issue covering criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, mental health issues, social issues, and homelessness.
- 18 Community wardens and other community groups provide a valuable contribution to the overall safety of the city centre and augment the work of the Police, freeing up Police resources for other competing priorities and enabling more sensitive and bespoke engagement with various community groups.
- 19 As Minister for Auckland and Minister of Justice, we propose to:
 - 19.1 Extend the existing temporary Safety Hub at Queens Wharf.

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- 19.2 Create three additional Safety Hubs at High Street, Queen Street and Karangahape Road.
- 19.3 Create an administrative space for the Akarana Māori Wardens at the Queen Street site.
- 20 There is support, including from the Tāmaki Makaurau Business Network, Auckland Council, HOTC, community warden groups and within government to continue and expand upon the existing temporary Queens Wharf Safety Hub beyond the FIFA WWC event.
- 21 The Hubs would have a range of uses including those undertaken by the existing Queens Wharf Safety Hub noted above. The hubs will be a base from which patrols of community warden groups in the city centre will be coordinated – enabling a more effective presence in the city centre of safety personnel.
- 22 These hubs will be staffed by trained Māori and Pacific wardens as well as ethnic and community patrol groups. The involvement of community warden groups with broader functions than those of CPNZ volunteers will enable the Safety Hubs to expand on the activities carried out at the existing Queens Wharf Safety Hub. These community warden groups are in the process of finalising the operational details and functions for the hubs.
- 23 Police prevention teams and the Māori Engagement team provide a range of training and resources to wardens and patrol groups in Auckland. Specifically, Police training consists of:
 - 23.1 Basic training on the role of wardens and patrol groups, the law and first aid.
 - 23.2 Advanced training on crime prevention, public order, and child protection.
 - 23.3 Regular updates on crime trends and safety advice.
 - 23.4 Access to resources such as vehicles, radios and first aid kits.
- 24 Police informed us that they will continue to provide this same level of support to community warden and patrol groups participating in the Safety Hubs. We also heard that community warden and patrol groups are comfortable with these existing supports and training.
- 25 Beyond the Safety Hubs, during our discussions with the Māori Wardens, we were informed that the Akarana Māori Wardens do not have an administrative base in the central city. While modest, the funding requirements for a small administrative base (including an office space, storage area and car parks) is beyond the resources of the group. This administrative space would be part of the fourth Safety Hub site on Queen Street. Other Māori, Pacific and Ethnic warden groups and community patrol groups did not present a need for an administrative base, like the Akarana Māori Wardens.

IN CONFIDENCE

- 26 The Akarana Māori Wardens would use the administrative base to plan their work in the city, enabling a more effective presence of this group in the city. We understand that without this space, the Akarana Māori Wardens group could not participate in the proposed safety initiatives outlined in this Cabinet paper.
- 27 Eke Panuku Development has identified a potential site on Queen Street for this administrative space from within its property portfolio and is willing to provide this space as an in-kind contribution. However, some funding is required for refurbishment and running costs. This site is street-facing and will also be able to act as a fourth Safety Hub.
- 28 Total funding required to fund the four Safety Hubs and the administrative base for the Akarana Māori Wardens group is \$100,000. This is broken down as follows:
- 28.1 There are no costs for the continuation of the Safety Hub at Queens Wharf as Eke Panuku Development has agreed to contribute the existing shipping container free of charge.
- 28.2 Up to \$15,000 for refurbishment of one container for the Karangahape Road Safety Hub.
- 28.3 Up to \$30,000 for refurbishment of the site for the High Street Safety Hub.
- 28.4 Up to \$55,000 in refurbishment and running costs for the Safety Hub and administrative base for the Akarana Māori Wardens on Queen Street.
- 29 CPNZ has agreed, in conjunction with the community warden groups, to maintain operational responsibility and management for the Safety Hubs. This would include operational responsibility for the administrative space for the Akarana Māori Wardens.
- 30 The timeframes for implementing the Safety Hubs are as follows:
- 30.1 The Safety Hub at Queens Wharf can be operational from the date of the announcement (from 21 August 2023).
- 30.2 The remaining Safety Hubs will take an estimated two to three months to become operational.
- 31 There will be an ongoing opportunity to evaluate the performance of the Safety Hubs. We propose to seek feedback on the performance and viability of the Safety Hubs after six months. We note that Safety Hubs operating out of converted shipping containers may be relocated to other sites as directed by Police or community warden and patrol groups.

Cost of Living Implications

- 32 There are no cost-of-living implications for this proposal.

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Financial Implications

- 33 The purpose of the Proceeds of Crime Fund (the Fund) is to use funding from assets which are forfeited to the Crown under the Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Act 2009, to address organised crime harm and drug-related harm, test innovative solutions to complex issues relating to crime-related harm, and enable agencies to build an evidence-based case of what works in addressing crime-related harm.
- 34 To support establishing three city centre Safety hHubs and establishing an administrative space for the Akarana Māori Wardens, we propose Cabinet provide \$0.100 million from the Proceeds of Crime Fund to support the proposals outlined in this paper. This is consistent with one of the Fund's criteria which is to provide funding for initiatives that address crime-related harm to communities and improve community Wellbeing. A new appropriation "Auckland Community Safety Initiatives" will be created within Vote Business, Science and Innovation.

Legislative Implications

- 35 There are no legislative implications for this proposal.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

- 36 There are no regulatory impacts from this paper.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

- 37 There are no climate change implications from this paper.

Population Implications

- 38 Any expansion of Māori Warden activities must be done in genuine partnership with Māori communities. The Waitangi Tribunal (WAI 2147 Whaia te Mana Motuhake) stated that Māori community oversight of Māori wardens is essential. The proposals outlined in this paper have been jointly designed, and agreed to, by Māori Wardens groups.
- 39 Officials from MBIE have engaged with Te Puni Kokiri on this proposal, including to provide Ngā Wātene Māori O Akarana Māori Warden group with an administrative base in the Auckland city centre. Te Puni Kokiri has confirmed that it supports this initiative.

Human Rights

- 40 There are no human rights implications for this paper.

Use of external resources

- 41 No paid contractors or consultants will be used for this proposal.
- 42 The initiative will be delivered with the support of community support groups, including CPNZ and community warden groups, such as the Akarana Māori Warden group.

Consultation

- 43 This paper was prepared by MBIE. The following agencies were consulted on addressing community safety issues in the Auckland city centre, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Police, and Te Puni Kōkiri.

Proactive Release

- 44 We plan to release this Cabinet paper and minute proactively, subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Committee:

- 1 **Note** that concerns expressed by stakeholders, including residents and business groups, have highlighted the need for additional support for community safety in the Auckland city centre.
- 2 **Agree** to establish four city centre Safety Hubs in Auckland and an administrative centre for the Akarana Māori Warden group, to enable a more effective presence in the city centre and to improve community safety;
- 3 **Agree** to monitor and assess the ongoing performance of the Safety Hubs, and to seek formal feedback on the efficacy and viability of this initiative after six months;
- 4 **Agree** to establish the following new appropriation ‘Auckland Community Safety Initiatives’ to support improvements to community safety in the Auckland region within Vote Business, Science and Innovation;

Vote	Appropriation Minister	Appropriation Administrator	Title	Type	Scope
Vote Business, Science and Innovation	Minister for Auckland	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	Auckland Community Safety Initiatives	Non-Departmental Other Expense	This appropriation is limited to delivering initiatives to support improvements to community safety in the Auckland region.

IN CONFIDENCE

- 5 **Approve** the following changes to the Vote Business, Science and Innovation appropriation to provide for the decision in recommendation 2 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net debt:

Vote Business, Science and Innovation Minister for Auckland	\$m - increase/(decrease)			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 & Outyears
<i>Non-Departmental Other Expense: Auckland Community Safety Initiatives</i>	0.100	-	-	-
Total Operating	0.100	-	-	-

- 6 **Agree** that the expenses incurred under recommendation 5 above be charged against the Proceeds of Crime Fund;
- 7 **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2023/24 above be included in the 2023/24 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;

Authorised for lodgement.

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Auckland

Hon Ginny Andersen
Minister of Justice