MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

BRIEFING

Policy options on Phase 1 of EECA's public information campaign

Date:	8 May 2026	**Priority:**	High
Security classification:	Sensitive	**Tracking number:**	BRIEFING-REQ-0032411

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Simeon Brown **Minister for Energy**	**Note** that Ministerial decisions are urgently needed if you intend to change the Phase 1 campaign, ideally by 13 May. **Agree** to discuss the options for the Phase 1 campaign at the next Oversight Group meeting on 13 May, if your intention is to change the campaign.	13 May 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	**Position**	**Telephone**	**1st contact**
Andrew Craig	General Manager, Fuel Response Plan	Privacy of natural persons	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
The Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority has been consulted.

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved
☐ Declined
☐ Noted
☐ Needs change
☐ Seen
☐ Overtaken by Events
☐ See Minister's Notes
☐ Withdrawn

Comments

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Date:	8 May 2026	**Priority:**	High
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Purpose

To provide you with options on EECA's Phase 1 public information campaign.

Executive summary

On 25 March, the Ministerial Economic Security and Supply Chains Group (the Oversight Group) invited the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) to commence a public information campaign aligned with Phase 1 of the Diesel and Petrol Fuel Response Plan from 28 March 2026. On 30 April, you requested MBIE to provide you with further options on EECA's Phase 1 campaign.

If you intend to reorient the Phase 1 campaign, Ministerial decisions are urgently needed. This is because EECA is already in week 6 of the 12-week campaign. Advertising placement must be secured a week in advance and, in lieu of any further Ministerial decisions, EECA has had to undertake a conservative commitment of $133,000 for advertisements in week 7.

EECA advised that within the first five weeks of the campaign, New Zealanders are estimated to have saved 10.1 million litres of fuel and avoided $34 million in fuel costs. However, EECA's industry-standard methodology to measure effectiveness also has a number of limitations. An independent evaluation of the Phase 1 campaign is underway, and you will be updated on its results.

The campaign has entered a lower-spending phase to maintain fuel-saving behaviours created by the initial high-spending phase. The options for the remaining five weeks of the campaign (weeks 8 to 12) are:

- end the campaign early
- reduce spending to **$133,000 per week + $48,000 in one-off production cost ($713,000 total)**, reaching **55 per cent of all drivers, 5.5 times a week**. Breakeven point of **216,000 litres** saved over five weeks, or
- continue as planned at **$190,000 per week + $48,000 in one-off production cost ($998,000 total)**, reaching **67 per cent of all drivers**, **7.5 times a week.** Breakeven point of **302,000 litres** saved over five weeks.

MBIE is of the view that proceeding with the last weeks of the campaign represents a low-cost, low-risk measure resulting in modest benefits. Notwithstanding limitations in methodology, MBIE considers that it is highly likely for the remaining weeks of the campaign to achieve a positive "return" over the breakeven points, in terms of fuel savings generated.

MBIE recommends that you discuss your intentions on the Phase 1 campaign at the next Oversight Group meeting Wednesday, 13 May. MBIE and EECA are also working through the details of options and trade-offs for the Phase 2 campaign. The aim is to provide the advice on Thursday, 14 May and will include initial advice on assessing the effectiveness of Phase 2 campaign.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** that Ministerial decisions are urgently needed if you intend to change the Phase 1 campaign, ideally by Wednesday, 13 May.

Noted

b **Agree** to discuss the options for the Phase 1 campaign at the next Oversight Group meeting on Wednesday, 13 May, if your intention is to change the campaign.

Agree/Disagree

Privacy of natural persons

Andrew Craig
General Manager, Fuel Response Plan
Fuel Response, MBIE
08 / 05 / 2026

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Energy
..... / ...... / ......

Background

1. On 25 March, the Ministerial Economic Security and Supply Chains Group (the Oversight Group) asked the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) to begin working on a public information campaign funded from its baselines.[1] On 28 March, the initiative was launched, aiming to encourage practical actions for improved fuel efficiency and reductions in consumption.

2. Attached at **Annex One**, is a timeline and excerpts from previous Cabinet papers.

3. Through MBIE, EECA has been keeping the Oversight Group updated on campaign progress, scale and performance. EECA has also been working closely with MBIE on designing key messaging, communications and policy advice for Ministers.

4. On 23 April, EECA provided you with a briefing on the effectiveness of its twelve-week campaign [EECA 2026 BRF 014 refers]. This campaign forms part of Phase 1 of the Diesel and Petrol Fuel Response Plan (the Fuel Response Plan).

   Highlights from the briefing:

   - Messaging for the Phase 1 campaign achieved high penetration and landed well with the public. After an initial period of higher spending, EECA's existing plan includes a reduction in weekly spend over time as part of a twelve-week media campaign.

   - Should Government decide to move into Phase 2, EECA plans to tailor its messaging and approach.

5. Following EECA's briefing on 30 April, you requested MBIE to provide you with further options on EECA's Phase 1 campaign (i.e. this briefing), as well as right-sizing EECA's campaigns for future Phases.

6. MBIE and EECA are currently working through the details of options and trade-offs for the Phase 2 campaign. The aim is to provide this advice by Thursday, 14 May. In order to meet your expectations for public accountability and transparency in spending, the advice will also include our initial assessment on how to measure and assess the effectiveness of Phase 2.

Ministerial decisions are urgently needed if you intend to reorient the Phase 1 campaign

7. EECA is in week 6 of its 12-week Phase 1 campaign. Advertising placement must be secured a week in advance and, in lieu of any further Ministerial decisions, EECA has had to undertake a conservative commitment of $133,000 for advertisements in week 7. This is a more conservative approach than the original $190,000 planned in response to your direction.

8. If you intend to further downsize the Phase 1 campaign, Ministerial decisions on this matter should be made as early as possible. Ideally, a decision should be made by Wednesday, 13 May, so that any intentions to reduce spending are completed in a timely manner.

[1] Separately, on 13 April 2026, Cabinet noted that while officials do not consider a move to Phase 2 is yet required, EECA's Phase 2 campaign and public messaging to reduce fuel demand can be activated.

On EECA's methodology to measure effectiveness

EECA advised that its Phase 1 campaign achieved high penetration and landed well with the public

9. EECA has advised that within the first five weeks of the campaign, New Zealanders are estimated to have saved 10.1 million litres of fuel and avoided $34 million in fuel costs.[2] compared to $2.915 million spent at the end of week 5. This is based on driver surveys and stated uptake of recommended actions.

10. EECA further advised that at the end of week 5, the campaign is estimated to have reached 90 per cent of New Zealanders. 32 per cent of all drivers reported taking a targeted action in response to the campaign.

11. At a high level, the impact of the EECA Phase 1 campaign is estimated by the following methodology:

    a. take the lowest value from a range of existing studies that estimates the impact of an action that saves fuel (e.g. smooth acceleration, removing roof racks)

    b. aggregate that value with a weekly survey that identifies the proportion of drivers who reported undertaking that action in that week

    c. multiply by the fuel price.

12. EECA's full methodology is attached in **Annex Two**.

While EECA's methodology is considered industry standard, it has limitations

13. EECA's approach is considered an industry standard for measuring the effect of social marketing information campaigns based on an established model from New South Wales and has been used to evaluate a large number of public messaging across agencies. However, EECA acknowledges that this approach has the following inherent limitations:

    - self-reporting bias
    - assumes that drivers apply behaviours (eg removing roof-racks) consistently throughout the week
    - uncertainty on how well they have applied said behaviours, and
    - challenges with taking into account the impact of other factors (e.g. self-initiated fuel saving initiatives due to high price signals) that resulted in said behaviours.

14. To address the above limitations and avoid overestimation, EECA uses the lowest end of the expected range of savings. EECA numbers around behaviour change are also based on the drivers surveyed having seen the campaign material first.

15. The expected savings figures are derived from a mix of lab-based and real-life studies, primarily sourced from the US and Canadian government sources, which EECA believes represent the best available evidence. With the exception of figures around speed reduction

[2] Week Six results will be available by Wednesday, 13 May.

derived from NZ Transport Agency research, overseas studies were used due to limited New Zealand-specific research of sufficient robustness.

An independent evaluation of the Phase 1 campaign is underway

16. An independent research provider (Verian) will undertake a fuller evaluation of the Phase 1 campaign in the next two weeks, aiming to better compare the fuel-saving behaviours of those who have been exposed to the campaign versus those who were not. This evaluation should better disaggregate the impact of the campaign versus the impact of other effects (e.g. price signals) on behaviours, thereby providing a more accurate picture on the effectiveness of the Phase 1 campaign.

17. This evaluation is intended to be conservative, transparent and well-documented for the purposes of both internal reporting and external accountability. MBIE will provide you with an update following the completion of this evaluation. EECA routinely carries out independent evaluations of its large public information initiatives.

Options to change the size of EECA's Phase 1 campaign

The campaign is entering a lower-spending, maintenance phase

18. EECA reports that up to **Saturday**, **9 May**, **$3.29 million** has been spent and **$0.13 million** committed to date over seven weeks of a total planned 12-week campaign. The total cost of the campaign is **$4.6 million**, with around **$1.18 million** remaining.

19. EECA's strategy started with front-loaded spending in the early weeks to achieve rapid reach and penetration. Spending is reduced substantially in later weeks, particularly weeks 7 to 12, to maintain behavioural change at a lower cost. The table below summarises the campaign and spending to date:

	Objective	Spend (one-off)
Set-up (complete)	Establish campaign messaging and production	$340,000 production cost, $75,000 campaign performance monitoring (surveying drivers) over six weeks
Time horizon	**Objective**	**Spend**
Week 1–3 (complete)	Fast and effective messaging to households at scale, through mass reach tools	$600,000 per week on mass reach tools (eg TV and press)
Week 4–6 (complete)	Maintain exposure to improve recall and uptake of actions, through mass reach tools	$375,000 per week on mass reach tools (eg TV and press)
Week 7–12	Targeted maintenance of behaviours, dropping mass-reach channels like TV and press	$190,000 per week on targeted communications (eg billboards near petrol stations, digital channels and search engines), as well as $23,000 in one-off production cost for shortform content

The three options are to end the campaign early, reduce spending or continue as planned

20. The purpose of the later weeks is to maintain fuel-saving behaviours achieved by the initial weeks of the campaign through a lower-cost approach.

21. This approach drops broad-reach channels, such as television and press, instead targeting radio and digital audio, out-of-home messaging such as billboards near petrol stations, digital channels and search engines.

22. As noted earlier, $133,000 has already been committed to week 7. To continue at this scale, EECA would need to commit $23,000 for a one-off production cost to produce shorter versions of existing advertisements that cost less on a weekly basis to run.[3]

23. The three options on the direction of the remaining five weeks of the campaign (weeks 8 to 12) are as follows:

	One: End campaign early	**Two: Reduce spending to $133,000 per week**	**Three: Continue at $190,000 as planned**
One-off production cost	-	$23,000 production $25,000 campaign performance monitoring	$23,000 production $25,000 campaign performance monitoring
Weekly spend	-	$133,000	$190,000
Reach	-	51% of all drivers in New Zealand	67% of all drivers in New Zealand
Frequency	-	5.5 times per week	7.5 times per week
Total cost incurred	-	$713,000 over 5 weeks	$998,000 over 5 weeks
Projected breakeven point where spend on campaign equals $ amount of fuel saved and results in a positive "return" for the campaign	-	216,000 litres over 5 weeks (assuming $3.30 per litre of petrol)	302,000 litres over 5 weeks (assuming $3.30 per litre of petrol)

24. Notwithstanding limitations in methodology, EECA estimated that around 10.1 million litres of fuel were saved over the first five weeks of higher spendings and reach, avoiding $34 million in fuel costs off an investment of $2.915 million spent.

25. As above, depending on spend, 216,000 to 302,000 litres of fuel saved is the "breakeven point" for the final five weeks of the campaign. Given these figures are substantially below the estimated level of fuel savings, MBIE is of the view that the final five weeks of the campaign are highly likely to achieve a positive "return". In the context of the overall Fuel

[3] EECA has negotiated to use its existing assets for this week at a lower price but will not be able to repeat this in future weeks.

Response Plan, the later weeks of the EECA campaign represent a low-cost, low-risk, demand-side measure with modest benefits.

26. One risk with ending the campaign early is that fuel-saving behaviours developed from the earlier weeks may not be reinforced.

27. Aside from direct benefit of behavioural change resulting in fuel saved, MBIE notes that an information campaign can result in a variety of more indirect benefits. Examples include, combating misinformation through the provision of authoritative information where the lack of consistent and strong government messaging may result in misleading or incorrect information filling the gap. Campaigns can also help build trust in government and improve social cohesion.

28. Once the campaign ends, EECA will continue to provide fuel efficiency advice (along with other types of energy) as part of its business-as-usual activities. This will be undertaken through regular channels, such as search, social media and online tools. EECA will continue to monitor consumer actions and attitudes through consumer and business quarterly monitors and update you accordingly. These business-as-usual activities will also adapt and respond to the context at the time. For example, should high petrol prices persist there can be a continued focus on fuel efficiency.

Next steps

MBIE recommends that you discuss your intentions on the Phase 1 campaign at the next Oversight Group meeting

29. As mentioned prior, the decisions around the direction of the EECA campaign for Phase 1 were originally discussed by the Oversight Group, followed by a Cabinet decision. To give EECA a clear direction for the remaining weeks of the Phase 1 campaign, MBIE recommends that the policy options are discussed at the next Oversight Group meeting on Wednesday, 13 May.

You will receive further advice on options for the Phase 2 campaign and beyond

30. As noted, MBIE and EECA are currently working through the details of options and trade-offs for the Phase 2 campaign. The aim is to provide the advice on Thursday, 14 May, and will include our initial assessment of how to measure and assess the effectiveness of Phase 2.

31. MBIE and EECA are also working on what the information campaign for Phases 3 and 4 might look like, including consideration on a transition to All-of-Government messaging. MBIE will update your office further as this work progresses.

Annexes

Annex One: Timeline and Cabinet paper excerpts

Annex Two: EECA’s methodology

Annex One: Timeline and Cabinet paper excerpts

- **20 March** – EECA campaign first commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office through Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

- **Week of 23 March** – EECA provided visibility of the campaign content, including slide deck "Stretch the Tank" and estimated initial costs directed through MBIE. Discussions between EECA, MBIE and Ministers' Offices, including the Office of Ministers Willis and Jones.

- **25 March** – Fuel response plan 2026 Cabinet paper considered by Oversight Group; Oversight Group asks EECA to begin working on a two-tiered public information campaign with the following recommendation:

  6. invite EECA to begin working on a two-tiered public information campaign that

  > *6.1. first, encourages practical actions to improve fuel efficiency and reduce consumption; and*
  > *6.2. second, if required, moves to targeted messaging that asks the public to limit specific types of fuel use.*

- **26 March** – Campaign confirmed, and key messages finalised by Ministers' Offices. Minister Willis advised of the cost of the Phase 1 campaign by CE of EECA, via CE of MBIE: approximately $1.6 million had been budgeted for the first part of the campaign (estimated to be around four weeks) and a contingency of around $4 million should the campaign be extended, all within baseline.[4]

- **27 March** – Ministers Willis and Jones launch the Fuel Response plan, showcasing EECA campaign as part of the announcement. EECA provided Minister Watts' office with visibility of the campaign and the initial cost estimates.[5]

- **28 March** – EECA's Phase 1 campaign launched.

- **30 March** – Cabinet noted the Fuel response plan 2026 Cabinet paper considered by the Oversight Group on 25 March with the following recommendation:

  8. invited EECA to commence, from 28 March 2026, a two-tiered public information campaign, funded from baselines, that:

  > *8.1. first, encourages practical actions to improve fuel efficiency and reduce consumption; and*
  >
  > *8.2. second, if required, moves to targeted messaging that asks the public to limit specific types of fuel use*

[4] Note that the Phase 1 campaign has a total cost of $4.6 million.
[5] EECA's Board has been kept up to date and informed of activities throughout this process.

- **13 April** – Cabinet noted that officials do not consider a move to Phase 2 is required, but the system is ready. For example, EECA's Phase 2 campaign and public messaging to reduce fuel demand can be activated. Excerpt as follows:

  3. Note that officials do not consider a move to Phase 2 is required at this stage, but the system is ready:

    3.1. EECA's Phase 2 campaign and public messaging to reduce fuel demand can be activated

Annex Two: EECA's methodology

The effectiveness of EECA's Phase 1 campaign is estimated by taking the lowest value of a range of evidence-based estimates of the impact of fuel-saving actions and using weekly survey evidence to identify what portion of drivers report undertaking that action that week.

There are six steps:

- EECA calculate the average weekly litres used per private vehicle for both diesel and petrol. The data is based on Ministry of Transport's Fleet Stats and EECA Energy End Use Database.
- The expected savings for each action are taken from studies gathered by the US Department of Energy for their fuel saving campaigns. As these savings are primarily behavioural, they come with a range of uncertainty. EECA has undertaken a conservative approach by using the lowest end of the range.
    - *For example, research from the US have shown that removing roof racks (depending on its size) results in savings of two to 17 per cent. EECA uses the two per cent figure as its at the lowest end of the range.*
- Derived from the studies, the expected savings for each action is used to give an average amount that each private vehicle would save by taking up each action.
- The proportion of drivers who have confirmed they saw the campaign and then took an action (evidenced from a weekly representative sample of 750 drivers) is used to estimate the number of private vehicles that took up that action.
- The amount of fuel that would be saved by that action is multiplied by the number of private vehicles that started undertaking the action. This results in the total litres of diesel and petrol saved.
    - *For example, two per cent of sampled drivers say that they took off their roof racks. EECA then assumes that two percent of drivers have achieved a two percent saving in fuel.*
- Finally, the total litres of diesel and petrol is multiplied by current fuel prices to derive the total amount of dollars saved.