



Proactive Release

The following documents have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), on behalf of the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern:

Christchurch Call Research Partnership

The following documents have been included in this release:

Title of paper: Christchurch Call Research Partnership (SWC-22-SUB-0164 refers)

Title of minute: Christchurch Call Research Partnership (SWC-22-MIN-0164 refers)

Title of minute: Report of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee: Period Ended 16 September 2022 (CAB-22-MIN-0388 refers)

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction codes:

- Section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand; and
- Section 9(2)(j), to enable negotiations to be carried on without prejudice or disadvantage.

Office of the Prime Minister

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Christchurch Call Research Partnership

Proposal

- 1 I propose to commit \$917,000 from the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund to support a focused research partnership with social media companies and data charities. The goal is to develop tools to analyse how social media algorithms influence the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 The Government is committed to reducing the impact of violent extremism through our leadership of the Christchurch Call, and as a core element of our response to the Royal Commission into the terrorist attacks on Christchurch masjidain.

Background

- 3 On 15 March 2019 a terrorist killed 51 people and injured dozens more in attacks on two Christchurch mosques. The attacks were livestreamed on Facebook.
- 4 On 15 May 2019, President Macron and I led the adoption of the Christchurch Call to Action to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online. The Call brings together a community of governments, online service providers and civil society organisations, reflecting the reality that online harm is a problem that no one government, company or organisation can resolve alone.
- 5 Efforts under the Call in the last three years have made a very practical difference in reducing the visibility and spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online. There is more to do though, including on questions of whether the algorithms that influence what content social media users see contribute to the spread of extremist content and to radicalisation.
- 6 This issue has now been identified as a key priority in discussion with partner governments, as highlighted in my recent joint statements with leaders of the United States, European Union and the United Kingdom.

Analysis

Preventing the spread of extreme content requires more independent research

- 7 Better understanding the role of algorithms and data processes in the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content is critical to mitigating and limiting the resulting harm. New Zealand, along with the other supporters of the Christchurch Call, has committed to advance work that will:
 - 7.1 understand the data processes that may drive users towards terrorist and violent extremist content

- 7.2 develop effective interventions, based on a common view of the effects of data processes
- 7.3 provide technical solutions that prevent uploading and sharing; and detect and remove terrorist and violent extremist content.

8 s9(2)(f)



Access to AI systems and company data is critical

- 9 Work on these issues has been amongst the most difficult issues that the Call community has grappled with. The critical barrier to further independent research and assessment is access to information on system design and to data. The regulatory and commercial barriers to access for research groups are formidable and generally make the cost of independent research prohibitive.
- 10 Access to a company's AI technology poses potential risks to intellectual property and commercial material. Disclosure could also lead to more effective abuse of online services by bad actors. Were access to be abused or managed inappropriately, there is a risk that independent access could curtail the effectiveness of interventions. Regulatory constraints on access to user data are added barriers that raise the costs for independent researchers. The Christchurch Call commitments have been carefully designed to manage these risks. They now need to be operationalised.
- 11 New Zealand, the United States, Twitter and Microsoft will commission an open-source community called OpenMined to build software tools that overcome privacy and commercial concerns. The goal is to use the software to make tools available, initially to researchers and policy makers in the Christchurch Call community. As confidence in the system develops, wider access to other user communities could follow (with appropriate safeguards).
- 12 The software would allow a researcher to conduct research remotely on a secured dataset, along with automating the review and release steps of the results of the analysis through software. That requires the testing of some novel technologies to ensure the security of the system from end to end. The project will involve a proof-of-concept test on at least one, and possibly multiple, real social media datasets
s9(2)(f)
- 13 If successful, this tool could help demonstrate how to remove many of the legal, bureaucratic and cost barriers for carrying out algorithmic studies, and will potentially open a new field of research on algorithms. This could allow faster progress on understanding how social media algorithms propagate extreme content and test the effectiveness of prevention approaches.

14

s9(2)(i)
[Redacted]
s6(a)

Implementation

15 OpenMined will provide the required technical capability to deliver the project. They were selected because of their expertise and the compatibility of their proposal with the objectives of the proposal. They have strong existing capabilities in developing privacy enhancing technology and were selected in January for a pilot project on the sharing of sensitive national statistical data from the USA, UK, the Netherlands and Italy through the UN Statistical Agency. Social media partners will also provide support and access to crucial data and AI systems for testing the software.

16

s9(2)(i)
[Redacted]
DPMC will work with the partners to manage the contract with OpenMined.

s9(2)(i)	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Financial Implications

17 The project will be jointly funded by partners Twitter, Microsoft, the New Zealand government and the United States government. The total cost of US\$2 million will be evenly split between the four partners. New Zealand’s share of the financial cost for this project is therefore US\$500,000. The proposed cost of \$917,000 includes a 10% provision for exchange rate movements.

18 I intend to meet New Zealand’s share of the costs through the Emerging Priorities Fund. The Christchurch Call unit has worked with relevant agencies to access funding for the project from within existing resources and has concluded that there are no contestable or discretionary funds available at this time. I have also looked at the capacity to fund this within baselines. However, DPMC’s baseline funding for 2022/23 indicates strong pressure on existing funding resources. The Treasury has confirmed there are sufficient resources available in my Emerging Priorities Fund.

Legislative Implications

19 None.

Impact Analysis

Regulatory Impact Statement

- 20 An impact assessment is not required as this paper does not propose legislative or regulatory changes.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

- 21 The proposal has no climate implications.

Population Implications

- 22 The proposal is intended to generate tools that in time could help to reduce the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content targeting a range of population groups.

Consultation

- 23 This paper was prepared in consultation with the Treasury.

Communications

- 24 I plan to announce the project with Twitter, Microsoft and the US Government at the Christchurch Call to Action Leader's Summit in New York on Tuesday 20 September.

Proactive Release

- 25 This paper will be proactively released within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet, in accordance with Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4, with any appropriate redactions.

Recommendations

The Prime Minister recommends that the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 note that the Prime Minister's Emerging Priorities Fund was established in 2016 and its use is at the discretion of the Prime Minister;
- 2 note that the Christchurch Call was formed to reduce the harm generated by terrorist and violent extremist content online;
- 3 note that one limitation on progress towards the goals of the Christchurch Call is the dearth of independent research on data processes and algorithms that influence what content social media users see online;
- 4 agree to provide support to an open source community OpenMined to develop a software tool that could help overcome regulatory and commercial obstacles to independent research on social media algorithms;

- 5 agree to draw down the Emerging Priorities Fund by \$917,000 to develop the partnership with OpenMined, jointly funded with the United States government, Twitter and Microsoft;
- 6 approve the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decisions in recommendation 5 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 & Outyears
Prime Minister					
Advice and Support Services MCA					
Departmental Output Expenses:					
Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General	0.917	-	-	-	-
Total Operating	0.917				

- 7 agree that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2022/23 above be included in the 2022/23 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;
- 8 agree that the expenses incurred under recommendation 6 above be charged against the Emerging Priorities Fund established as part of Budget 2016;
- 9 invite the Prime Minister to report back to Cabinet in late 2023 on progress in advancing the Christchurch Call programme.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Christchurch Call Research Partnership

Portfolio Prime Minister

On 14 September 2022, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the Prime Minister’s Emerging Priorities Fund was established in 2016 and its use is at the discretion of the Prime Minister;
- 2 **noted** that the Christchurch Call was formed to reduce the harm generated by terrorist and violent extremist content online;
- 3 **noted** that one limitation on progress towards the goals of the Christchurch Call is the dearth of independent research on data processes and algorithms that influence what content social media users see online;
- 4 **agreed** to provide support to an open source community OpenMined to develop a software tool that could help overcome regulatory and commercial obstacles to independent research on social media algorithms;
- 5 **agreed** to draw down the Emerging Priorities Fund by \$917,000 to develop the partnership with OpenMined, jointly funded with the United States government, Twitter and Microsoft;
- 6 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the decisions in paragraph 5 above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 & Outyears
Prime Minister					
Advice and Support Services MCA					
Departmental Output Expenses:		-	-	-	-
Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General	0.917				
Total Operating	0.917				

- 7 **agreed** that the changes to appropriations for 2022/23 above be included in the 2022/23 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply;
- 8 **agreed** that the expenses incurred under paragraph 6 be charged against the Emerging Priorities Fund established as part of Budget 2016;
- 9 **invited** the Prime Minister to report back to Cabinet in late 2023 on progress in advancing the Christchurch Call programme.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Kiri Allan
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for SWC



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee: Period Ended 16 September 2022

On 19 September 2022, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee for the period ended 16 September 2022:

SWC-22-MIN-0164 **Christchurch Call Research Partnership** CONFIRMED
Portfolio: Prime Minister



Rachel Hayward
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet