

Office of the Prime Minister



Prime Minister

Minister for Arts, Culture & Heritage

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister for National Security & Intelligence

16 JUL 2020

Dr Simon Thornley

By email: fyi-request-12847-85e314e8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: PMO 2020-104

Dear Dr Simon Thornley

Privacy Act and Official Information Act request relating to communications relating to yourself or other members of the 'COVID-19 Plan B' team

Thank you for your Privacy Act 1993 and Official Information Act 1982 (the Acts) requests, received on 25 May 2020. You requested:

"...all e-mails or other written communication from the Prime Minister's office to media outlets in New Zealand related to posts made by Dr Simon Thornley, or other members of the "Covid Plan B" team (<http://www.covidplanb.co.nz/>), about Covid-19 or the government's response to this issue."

The timeframe for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 20 working days because it necessitated consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

Upon a search of our records, we have identified one email dated 19 June 2020 that is relevant to your request. This has some information withheld under section 29(1)(a) of the Privacy Act and section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act, which relate to withholding information which relates to the privacy of natural persons. For clarity, we have referenced these redactions with section 9(2)(a) in the document, but both grounds apply.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. P. Nahna'.

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff

On Sun, 19 Apr 2020 at 2:51 PM, Ellen Read <§9(2)(a)> wrote:

Hey §9(2)(a)

Not relevant to your request

These questions are more appropriate for the Health Minister so I'm looping one of his team in on this. They may or may not be able to provide a response within your deadline.

Stay well,

Ellen

Ellen Read | Deputy Chief Press Secretary

Office of the Prime Minister

T: §9(2)(a) | M: §9(2)(a) | Email §9(2)(a)

From: §9(2)(a)

Sent: Sunday, 19 April 2020 2:46 PM

To: Ellen Read §9(2)(a)

Subject: Newshub request

Hi Ellen,

§9(2)(a) here, from a new desk at Newshub! Hope you're staying safe as much as you can while working.

I have some questions I really need the PM to answer this afternoon, which unfortunately only came to light after the 1pm presser.

Any chance you could please send me a response to the below ASAP?

- Epidemiologist Simon Thornley and his associates from the University of Auckland are claiming that the Government does not have a variation of views leading its health response to Covid. What is your response to this?

- Have any of the health experts providing advice to the Govt challenged it's decision to enter an Alert Level 4 lockdown?

Give me a ring if you need on s9(2)(a)

Best, s9(2)(a)

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s9(2)(a) **REPORTER**

NEWS MEDIAWORKS MOBILE s9(2)(a)



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Thank you.

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s9(2)(a) **REPORTER**

NEWS MEDIAWORKS MOBILE s9(2)(a)



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Thank you.