



27 October 2020

Selva Ramasami
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Ref: OIA-2020/21-0159

Dear Selva

Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 website and the Tamil Language

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 18 September 2020. You requested:

"The Executive Director of Office of Ethnic Communities wrote on 4 Sept 2020 on the subject of Translations

"On the subject of material being available in multiple languages there's information in 24 languages available on the COVID-19 website. We have been asked about other options, not currently available such as Tamil and Cambodian and have raised this with the All of Government response team".

May I request the following:

- 1. The names of individuals, agencies and organisations including Members of Parliament who have requested All of Government response team for Covid 19 information to be made available in Tamil Language*
- 2. When will the information be made available in Tamil Language"*

Please find our responses to your questions set out below:

1. The names of individuals, agencies and organisations including Members of Parliament who have requested All of Government response team for Covid 19 information to be made available in Tamil Language

The COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group's Communications and Engagement team have identified two requests that have been received. I am withholding the names of the individuals who made the requests on behalf of their organisations under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals. However, I can advise that the requests were made by the Dunedin Tamil Society and the Canterbury Indian Tamil Association. In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

Our records do not show any requests from Members of Parliament.

Content on the COVID-19 website is produced in 23 languages and 5 accessible or alternative formats. Decisions about the languages into which we translate material are made based on evidence there is a need for that translation. This evidence includes:

- Advice from the Ministry of Health about which communities were likely to be more at risk.

- Knowledge of a population resident in New Zealand who do not speak or read English or the other languages in which information is available. This is drawn from sources including Census data, language line use and advice from ethnic media and advertising organisations.
- Ongoing input from key government organisations with relevant expertise and relationships such as the Office for Ethnic Communities, Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Auckland Council.

The COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group also works to ensure information is provided to non-English speaking audiences in a timely way by providing ethnic media organisations and key culturally and linguistically diverse stakeholders such as community leaders, faith leaders, NGOs and charities with information in English that they are encouraged to use as appropriate to inform their communities.

2. When will the information be made available in Tamil Language

With the whole of New Zealand now at level 1, the COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group is actively planning for future outbreaks. As part of this, plans are currently being developed for ensuring information continues to be made available in as many languages as is practicable.

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

Finally, for your information, this response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Barnes
Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group