

1 March 2021

Andi Buchanan

By email: fyi-request-14593-c46731d0@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202100587

Dear Andi Buchanan

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 1 February 2021 for information related to the NZ COVID Tracer app.

Responses to your questions are set out below.

“1. Why was drivers licence was chosen as the primary method of verification, as opposed to RealMe, or other identification options such as passports?”

The QR code posters used by NZ COVID Tracer are backed by the New Zealand Business Number (NZBN) register, which holds information about every registered business in New Zealand. When NZ COVID Tracer was first released the only way to obtain a QR Code poster was through the Business Connect service, operated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE), using a RealMe login.

We received feedback that many people found this process difficult to use. This led to the creation of the Rapid QR Service, available at <https://qrform.tracing.covid19.govt.nz>. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry and MBIE requires us to verify the identity of people requesting posters on behalf of a business registered with the NZBN.

The Rapid QR Service was developed under urgency, and a decision was made to prioritise identity verification using NZ driver licences. This decision was informed by previous experience the Ministry had with verifying driver licences, and their widespread availability. We appreciate that not everyone has a driver licence or that some people may find it difficult to use an online process, so a manual process was also established to support people who have other forms of identity, including a NZ passport. This has included, at times, printing and mailing posters to people.

“2. Are there plans to change the primary online QR code generation process to include other forms of identification?”

For people who wish to request a poster on behalf of a business, there are no plans to offer alternative forms of identification. We are, however, planning to remove the identity verification requirement for people requesting a poster as an individual (e.g. for a private party).

"3. If the answer to (2) is no, has there been discussion of this since the initial roll-out out of the app, and (if so) what conclusions have been reached from those discussions or are they ongoing?"

There are regular discussions about additional features and functionality that would add value to the NZ COVID Tracer platform. At this stage, adding additional verification methods is not a priority. These discussions, however, are ongoing and decisions are based on consumer feedback and business priority.

The Business Connect service also remains available as an alternative to the Rapid QR Service for those that have a RealMe account and authority to act over the relevant NZBN entity.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely



Gaynor Bradfield
**Manager, Office of the Deputy Director-General
Data and Digital**