

2 December 2021

John Jacobson

By email: fyi-request-15419-385121ca@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202104400 & H202106233

Tēnā koe John

Re. 554040: Official Information Act investigation - Extension complaint and 551987: Ombudsman Act investigation - Delay in responding to reconsidered request for information

I refer to your requests under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 13 April 2021 (ref.H20210440) and 10 May 2021 (ref.H202106233) to the Ministry of Health. Following your complaint to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman has recommended the Ministry to apologise for the delays in responding to your requests.

OIA H202106233:

“...all internal communications relating to the processing of my request...”

On 8 June 2021, the Ministry extended the due date for responding to this request as further consultation was required. This was for internal consultation within the Ministry to ascertain which team was responsible for the information requested.

The Ministry acknowledges that the timeframe for making and communicating a decision on your request should not have been extended. Therefore, the Ministry would like to apologise for the unwarranted extension relating to your request for communication on vaccine certification.

OIA H202104400:

On 11 June 2021, the Ministry advised you of its decision to reconsider the response provided to you on 7 May 2021 where all information pertaining to your request of 13 April 2021 was withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain the constitutional conventions that protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials. The Ministry advised that the reconsidered response would be provided to you by 8 July 2021.

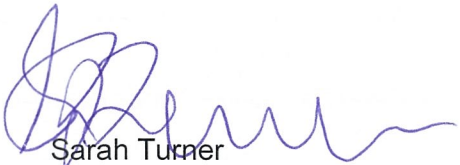
The Ministry was unable to meet this timeframe and released the reconsidered response to you on 17 September 2021. The final response comprised of various email correspondence, two internal memos and a PowerPoint presentation. The Ministry would like to apologise for the delay in providing this information to you.

The Ministry would also like to thank you for your patience and acknowledges that more could have been done to meet these requests.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 response, the Ministry is experiencing significantly higher volumes of queries and requests for information. Paired with the considerable increase in requests and internal capacity issues, this directly impacted the team's ability to respond to your requests on time.

To enhance our processes and combat the increase in correspondence, the OIA Services team is recruiting additional advisors. Additionally, the Ministry also actively monitors relevant data, guidance, and publications (including those produced by the Ombudsman and Public Service Commission) to identify areas for improvement and establish quality and performance measures related to OIA performance.

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Turner
Deputy Director-General
Office of the Director-General