

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



30 September 2021

Scott

fyi-request-15473-423f8785@requests.fyi.org.nz

OIACH0720

Dear Scott

Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 weekly reports

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 28 June 2021. You requested:

“... copies of all COVID-19 Response Weekly Reports, dated from the beginning of February to 15 June.”

On 21 July 2021, the time frame for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 30 working days because it necessitated a search through a large quantity of information, and consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request.

On 10 September, my Office contacted you to note that due to the high tempo of work resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak in Auckland that the process for this OIA request was delayed, but we would provide you a response as soon as possible.

Following this extension and the unexpected further delay, I am now in a position to respond. I appreciate your patience given the delayed response.

I am releasing to you the COVID-19 Response Weekly Reports that I received in February, March and April of this year. Some information in these reports has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- Section 6(a) - to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- Section 6(c) - to protect the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial
- Section 7(b)(ii) – to avoid prejudice to the relations of the Government of New Zealand and the self-governing State of the Cook Islands
- Section 7(b)(iii) – to avoid prejudice to the relations of the Government of New Zealand and the self-governing State of Niue
- Section 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons
- Section 9(2)(b)(ii) - to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or who is the subject of the information
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i) - to protect the supply of similar information in the future
- Section 9(2)(ba)(ii) - to prevent damage to the public interest
- Section 9(2)(c) - to protect the health or safety of members of the public

- Section 9(2)(f)(iv) - to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- Section 9(2)(g)(i) - to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion
- Section 9(2)(h) - to maintain legal professional privilege
- Section 9(2)(j) - to enable negotiations to be carried on without prejudice or disadvantage
- Section 9(2)(k) - to prevent disclosure or use for improper gain or advantage

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

The remaining reports within scope of your request have been identified and are being administratively processed. You can expect to receive these in due course.

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 'CH', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response