

1 February 2021

William Hughes

By email: fyi-request-17956-438a6311@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202117770

Tēnā koe William

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 14 December 2022 relating to the choice of domain names for the *Book My Vaccine* and *My Covid Record* Apps. You asked:

"I am seeking information relating to the decision to use 'mycovidrecord.nz' and 'bookmyvaccine.nz' as the domain names for the "My Covid Record" and "Book My Vaccine" websites managed by the Ministry of Health, specifically:

- * What process was followed when choosing the domain names for these sites?*
- * Why was the '.nz' top level domain chosen rather than the 'health.nz' or 'govt.nz' top level domains?*
- * What consideration was given to the risk of unauthorized sites using similar domain names for malicious purposes?*
- * If the Ministry received advice or guidance from other parts of the New Zealand government in relation to this choice"*

At the start of 2021, the COVID-19 Technology Governance Group endorsed a recommendation to register covid19.health.nz to use as the root zone for all new digital services being provisioned for the COVID-19 response.

In late June 2021 several domain name options were presented for the *Book My Vaccine* system, including bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz and bookmyvaccine.nz. At this time a recommendation was made to use bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz as the canonical domain name, and to redirect other domain names (e.g. bookmyvaccine.nz) to it. The Ministry had also acquired other bookmyvaccine domain names, including .co.nz, .net.nz, .org.nz, and .maori.nz.

Additionally, it was recommended that bookmyvaccine.nz be used in marketing and printed material. This was to ensure there was a short and memorable domain name that could be easily typed by the general public, given the large scale of the advertising plan. People using bookmyvaccine.nz would be redirected to the bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz domain name.

These recommendations were endorsed by the steering group of the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme on 6 July 2021.

A similar pattern was followed for the launch of *My Covid Record*, where app.covid19.health.nz was used as the canonical domain, and mycovidrecord.nz was used as the marketing domain. Around this time the Ministry became aware of registrations of similarly spelt domain names that were used by third parties for other purposes, which were bought after the *My Covid Record*

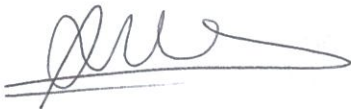
name was disclosed by the media. The Ministry was unable to reach an agreement with holders of these domain names to transfer them to the Ministry.

In early October 2021, the Ministry received advice from the Department of Internal Affairs about the use of domain names for government services, specifically the use of the .nz public zones and discouraging defensive registration. In light of this advice, and the unresolved use of similar domains, the Ministry updated the domain name policy for COVID-19 services to avoid the use of .nz public zones (for both canonical and redirected domains) and instead use either a subdomain of covid19.health.nz or, for nationally significant services, a domain on health.nz directly.

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

Nāku noa, nā



Astrid Koornneef

Director
National Immunisation Programme