



5 September 2022

Harold
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Ref: OIA-2021/22-1386

Dear Harold

Follow-up request relating to COVID-19 false information reporting cell

Thank you for your follow-up to the Official Information Act request response provided to you on 18 July 2022. You requested that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) reconsider its response for the below information:

- 1) *A copy of all of the "first report to Ministers" referred to above*
- 2) *Copies of all subsequent reports to Ministers in this series*
- 3) *If the cell has a set of terms of reference and/or an operating model, I would like to request copies of them*

In response to questions 1 and 2 of your request, DPMC can now release the briefings titled 'Challenges to Aotearoa's Covid-19 response' dated 17 December 2021 and 18 February 2022. Where information is withheld it is under one or more of the following sections of the Act, as applicable:

- Section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- Section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future.

In response to question 3 of your request, as previously stated only an early draft terms of reference document was created. It was not materially relied upon in producing the two reports. Therefore, DPMC maintains its position to withhold the document in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

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

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

We do not intend to publish this response on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website.

Yours sincerely

Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group