

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health



12 AUG 2022

Chris McCashin

fyi-request-19926-e3f36a57@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: AVOIA66-2022

Tēnā koe Mr McCashin

Official Information Act request relating to impacts analysis of lockdowns

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 15 July 2022. You have requested:

"[...] any and all evidence, reports, assessment of impacts, cost / benefit analysis of lockdowns that has been carried out in New Zealand? If there is no reporting then why not?"

Please also provide any and all correspondence between DPMC, Ministry of Defence, NZ Police, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education about forecast lockdowns from January 2022 to today's date. Please include any and all specialist teams that might be working directly on locking Kiwis down.

Please provide all correspondence between these agencies about further restrictions to current settings, legal justification, legal opinions, and all legal work done to justify draconian lockdowns. [...]"

On 8 August 2022, my Office advised you that your request for correspondence between the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education about forecast lockdowns from January 2022 had been transferred to the relevant agencies. The Ministry of Defence refused the transfer as it does not hold any information considered to be within scope of your request.

On 3 December 2021 we shifted from the Alert Level system to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic light system). This move supported a shift in the focus of our response from elimination to an approach based on minimisation and protection. This shift in strategy and approach was further supported by high rates of vaccination, reducing the need for reliance on lockdowns.

More information on this shift can be found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/history-of-the-covid-19-protection-framework-traffic-lights/>.

All of New Zealand is currently operating under the COVID-19 Protection Framework Traffic Light System. Ministers regularly review the settings of the traffic light system and reviews are supported by information across these key health-related areas:

- Vaccination rates
- Case numbers and trends

- Health system capacity

Other non-health related assessment factors include:

- Economic impacts
- Impacts on key population groups
- Public attitudes and compliance
- Operational considerations

The Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Protection Framework Assessment Committee provides advice regarding the health-related factors to inform these reviews. Additionally, information gathered from Government agencies and suggestions from regional leadership consultation groups are also considered. This information is then combined and shared across Government for review, and then for Ministerial consideration.

Therefore, impact analysis is usually conducted prior to any changes in the Alert Level or Traffic Light System settings. These assessments are included in decision-making papers relating to the Alert Level or Traffic Light Systems and are regularly proactively released on the Unite Against COVID-19 website.

You can find the decision-making papers here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/alert-levels-and-restrictions/>.

Accordingly, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the requested information is publicly available.

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

Nāku noa, nā



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