

3 November 2022

Liam White
fyi-request-20144-768b8eab@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Liam,

Your Official Information Act request, reference H2022009512:

Thank you for your request of 5 August 2022 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) requesting information relating to smallpox vaccines.

As part of the health and disability system reforms, as of 1 July 2022 the functions previously under the Manatū Hauora National Immunisation Programme directorate have transferred to Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora). As the matters you have raised now fall under the functions of Te Whatu Ora, our agency will respond to your request which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Each part of your request is responded to below:

All information about why second generation Smallpox vaccines have been ruled out as an option by New Zealand health authorities.

The COVID-19 Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group and experts from the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group discussed vaccine and treatments for monkeypox on 27 May 2022. It was noted that a third generation of vaccine has an improved side effect profile compared to the first and second generation of smallpox vaccines.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) noted in a situation update on 10 June 2022 that first-generation vaccines held in national reserves are not recommended for monkeypox at this time, as they do not meet current safety and manufacturing standards. This advice is publicly available at: www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON392.

Information about current second generation Smallpox vaccine stocks in New Zealand.

There are 8,300 smallpox vaccine doses stored at the Institute of Environmental and Scientific Research (ESR). This is an older (second generation) vaccine Elstree-BN which is part of New Zealand's commitment in 2009 to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Smallpox Vaccine Emergency Stockpile (SVES) for use in response to a smallpox event. The vaccines that New Zealand has in stock for SVES were not procured for commercial use, and therefore have no commercial value. The WHO certified the global eradication of smallpox in 1980.

Information about timelines for implementation of a vaccination programme using second generation Smallpox vaccines vs. third generation vaccines.

Te Whatu Ora's National Immunisation Programme is in the early stages of developing a vaccine delivery plan for the arrival of the vaccine. Therefore, this part of your request is being 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.

Any projections on the impact of a Monkeypox outbreak in New Zealand on gay and bisexual men in the following scenarios:

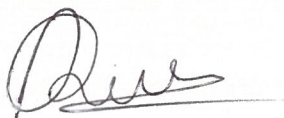
- A) Do nothing
- B) Use second generation vaccines when available
- C) Use third generation vaccines when available

Te Whatu Ora has identified one document within the scope of this part of your request titled “*Estimated At-Risk Groups for Monkeypox vaccine and associated costs*” dated 11 August 2022. However, this is being withheld in full under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, and section 9(2)(j) of the Act, to enable a Minister or any public service agency to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage (including commercial and industrial negotiations). Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

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.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may decide to proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Astrid Koornneef
Kaitohu | Director
National Immunisation Programme

