10 November 2022

Scott
fyi-request-20984-e72ff1e3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2022/23-0283

Dear Scott

Official Information Act request for the COVID-19 Disinformation Process Review

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 31 October 2022. You requested:

> *"I would like to make a request for a copy of the COVID-19 Disinformation Process Review.*
> *The document is referenced in Office of Film and Literature Classification material published on the Parliament website earlier this year:*
> *https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.parliament.nz%2Fresource%2Fen-NZ%2F53SCGA_EVI_118632_GA21083%2F13ad81f62ca6fc8638a750d02b996cde65d7030f&data=05%7C01%7Cinformation%40dpmc.govt.nz%7C5bd7425380db4308093d08dabab3ebeb%7Ceea6053309ef4b7a94060f38551cc613%7C0%7C0%7C638027579311984385%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=G7JmsgSczcM72VmRh81sPOH2Lgp8dhLAVS7roQsx5kE%3D&reserved=0*
> *"[OFLC's disinformation strategy] has been shared with DPMC, who have incorporated it into their own strategy documents, such as the COVID-19 Disinformation Process Review." (Quote on page 5).*
> *I would like to request a copy of the COVID-19 Disinformation Process Review referred to here."*

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) is developing advice on the appropriate response for New Zealand to counter misinformation and disinformation effectively and to strengthen our resilience to its harms. This involves looking at our specific needs and taking on lessons from other countries.

The challenge is to respond in a balanced and proportionate way that mitigates the harms caused while protecting human rights and freedoms, and our commitment to a free, open and secure internet. Successfully countering disinformation and building societal resilience to its harms requires "whole of society" solutions. The New Zealand government's response needs to involve working closely with a range of stakeholders, including media, academia, civil society, communities, and the private sector in order to get ahead of disinformation campaigns and countering them effectively.

DPMC's strategic approach to misinformation and disinformation has continued to evolve as the situation has changed over time. We do not have a record of a 'COVID-19 Disinformation Process Review' being developed. The Office of Film and Literature Classification has contributed to DPMC's overall work on developing an appropriate response to countering misinformation and disinformation, which may be what is referred to.

I am therefore refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information you have requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found. However, I have decided to release to you the paper *Communications approach for COVID-19 disinformation, online harms and scams*, dated 23 February 2022, which reflects a period during which the focus of the work narrowed to approaches to COVID-19 misinformation and disinformation.

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

This response may be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely

Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group