

# Hon Brooke van Velden

MP for Tāmaki  
Minister of Internal Affairs  
Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety



M Bell  
fyi-request-25307-ecd52f52@request.fyi.org.nz

Dear M Bell

I am responding to each part of your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) relevant to my Internal Affairs portfolio, transferred to my office from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 13 February 2024. Specifically, relating to my Internal Affairs portfolio, you requested the following:

*Please confirm whether the promised coming “full scale, wide ranging, independent inquiry conducted publicly with local and international experts” will involve the appropriateness and legality of granting the extreme immunity to Pfizer?*

*If you are unable to answer these questions, please confirm whether this is because you personally have signed a confidentiality agreement which prevents you from doing so?*

*In the coming inquiry factual responses are vitally needed for transparency yet because of the tendency to retreat behind confidentiality agreements to avoid self incrimination true transparency is in danger. Please advise what is planned to be in place to ensure that the inquiry overrides those confidentiality agreements signed by politicians and other public servants and hence compel factual responses from those called to do so?*

*As the Pfizer documents likely also forbid bringing Pfizer themselves into any disrepute what is planned to be in place to override this and compel factual responses regardless?*

My office holds no information or documents within the scope of your request. Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. I have provided some information on the inquiry process below for your information.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to seek an investigation and review of my decision by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz). The postal address is PO Box 10152, Wellington. Alternatively, you can phone 0800 802 602 or email [info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz).

### **Additional information**

All Royal Commissions must conduct their inquiries independently, impartially and fairly, in accordance with their terms of reference and legislative requirements.

Last year the new Government made clear its intention to change the terms of reference for the Royal Commission, as committed to in both the ACT-National and NZ First-National coalition agreements.

At the Government's request, the Royal Commission is undertaking the terms of reference consultation on behalf of the Government, and running it at the same time as its planned public engagement process.

The consultation on the terms of reference, which closes on 24 March 2024, seeks feedback on the inclusion of various topics, including vaccine procurement and efficacy, to the terms of reference for the Royal Commission as part of the Government's commitment to expanding the scope of the Inquiry. To make a submission on what you would like to see in an expanded terms of reference, I recommend you visit the Royal Commission's website at: [haveyoursay.covid19lessons.royalcommission.nz](https://haveyoursay.covid19lessons.royalcommission.nz).

We are now delivering on our commitment to give people a meaningful opportunity to have their say on the terms of reference. Nothing has been decided on what the expanded terms of reference will look like. Consideration of the changes to the scope of the Inquiry will happen after the results of public submissions come in.

At the conclusion of the consultation, I will consider the public feedback and take proposals to Cabinet for changes to the Royal Commission's terms of reference.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'BW', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Hon Brooke van Velden  
**Minister of Internal Affairs**