

Hon Casey Costello

Minister of Customs
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health
Associate Minister of Immigration
Associate Minister of Police



4 November 2024

OIA-229

P Robins
fyi-request-28645-d0c065a5@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear P Robins

I acknowledge your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request of 4 October 2024, where you requested:

“... all communications related to the independent advice you publicly referred to in order to support the proposed reduction in excise on heated tobacco products.

This includes any discussions within your office (including between you and your staff) and between you and your office with other ministers and ministerial offices about gathering information to support this excise reduction. It should include articles that were identified but not released and any communications that mention the six articles released.

For clarity, "communications" encompasses all forms of electronic and written correspondence, including but not limited to emails, text messages, messaging apps (such as WhatsApp, Signal, Slack, and Telegram), and handwritten notes (such as in notebooks, minutes or other records of meetings, post-it notes)”

Two documents have been identified and these are included with this letter.

I note that there is a wide body of scientific literature that focuses on harm reduction, rather than a moralistic, abstinence-only perspective on tobacco and nicotine products. This research is available online and my office and I have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing a wide range of evidence and information. It is necessary to withhold discussions within my office about this body of research under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by freephone at 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Casey Costello', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon Casey Costello
Associate Minister of Health

From: Richard Ninness
Sent: Monday, 4 November 2024 9:25 AM
To: Travis Ancelet
Subject: FW: Information on HTPs etc
Attachments: A_Decision-Theoretic_Public_Health_Framework_for_H.pdf; ijerph-13-01110.pdf; ijerph-17-03570.pdf; Nicotine without smoke_0.pdf; Published Lancet Comment THR 1 Feb24.pdf

From: Richard Ninness
Sent: Thursday, 3 October 2024 5:33 PM
To: Travis Ancelet <Travis.Ancelet@parliament.govt.nz>; Jade Paul <Jade.Paul@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Information on HTPs etc

So that you have it. Pretty likely there will be others wanting the info tomorrow (and may have to ask you to send it on), but pretty sure these were the orgs that asked.

R

From: Richard Ninness
Sent: Thursday, October 3, 2024 4:46 PM
To: Jo Moir <jo.moir@rnz.co.nz>; benedict.collins@tvnz.co.nz; Russell Palmer <russell.palmer@rnz.co.nz>; Adam Pearse <adam.pearse@nzme.co.nz>
Subject: Information on HTPs etc

Sorry for delay.

The Minister looked at a range of information around the effects of HTPs in Japan, and on the general approach of using safer products to help people quit smoking. This wasn't provided by health officials and was the 'independent advice' she referred to.

From: Richard Ninness
Sent: Monday, 4 November 2024 9:19 AM
To: Travis Ancelet
Subject: FW: Information on HTPs etc
Attachments: A_Decision-Theoretic_Public_Health_Framework_for_H.pdf; ijerph-13-01110.pdf; ijerph-17-03570.pdf; Nicotine without smoke_0.pdf; Published Lancet Comment THR 1 Feb24.pdf

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 3 October 2024 6:53 PM
To: Demelza Jackson <demelza.jackson@nzme.co.nz>
Subject: Fw: Information on HTPs etc

Demelza

Here you go. Just a reminder that there is a cabinet paper around this which set out what the govt decided and why. (IE Minister's never said this was what her decisions were based on.) I also have a chart that was provided by health that shows the relative safety of various products if you want to go there.

This is what went to other journalists (with the attachments)

The Minister looked at a range of information around the effects of HTPs in Japan, and on the general approach of using safer products to help people quit smoking. This wasn't provided by health officials and was the 'independent advice' she referred to.

R