



14 October 2021

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0209

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request for COVID-19 campaign costs

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 3 September 2021. You requested:

1. *"To date (03/09/2021), what has been the total spending in NZD on the COVID-19 publicity campaign run by DPMC? Please also specify the allocated limit/parameters of budget assigned to date, or at specific times in the past 18 months.*
2. *Please list all mediums used to date (eg. billboards, types of social media, radio etc.)*
3. *Please detail the number of staff (and position descriptions) allocated to the COVID-19 public/strategic communications process over the past 18 months.*
4. *Please list the nature, detail and scope of any external agencies or private businesses engaged by DPMC to facilitate this campaign (advice provided on strategy, design and targeting), and the brief they were given.*
5. *What strategic goals for achievement were set at the outset, or during the campaign?*
6. *What risk factors or concerns about the delivery or impact of the campaign have been identified by DPMC prior or during? (For instance - where concerns discussed about the public misinterpreting the advertising, widespread disagreement, public fatigue with the campaign, or the risks of failed engagement). What was done to mitigate these risks or where they deemed acceptable?"*

On 30 September 2021, The time frame for responding to your request was extended under section 15A of the Act by 10 working days because it necessitated consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

I have numbered your questions for ease of response.

In response to your first question, please see the table below for the total expenditure of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) COVID-19 Communications and Public Engagement team.

	2019/20 Financial Year	2020/21 Financial Year	July/August 2021
Total Publicity Expenditure	21,106,798	25,710,623	11,787,833
Vaccination costs (reimbursable by Ministry of Health)		8,162,277	4,541,466
Total Publicity cost to DPMC (exclusive of vaccinations)	21,106,798	17,548,346	7,246,367

Please note that publicity expenditure includes advertising, website, translations, production, market research, printing of flyers, booklets and promotional items, design services and other vendor costs directly associated with publicity campaigns. Staff costs are not included.

Regarding your request for DPMC's COVID-19 communications budget, please find allocations tabled below:

Date	Amount	Comment
15 May 2021	\$6.626M	
27 July 2020	\$5.900M	Allocated for publicity to be incurred from 27 Jul 20 - 30 Jun 21
	\$2.950M	Allocated for publicity to be incurred from 1 Jul 21 - 30 Jun 22
2 December 2020	\$15.569M	Allocated for publicity to be incurred from 27 Jul 20 - 30 Jun 21
	\$13.956M	Allocated for publicity to be incurred from 1 Jul 21 - 30 Jun 22
5 March 2021	\$2M	Due to COVID-19 resurgence
18 August 2021	\$2M	Due to COVID-19 resurgence

Please note that these figures are for external providers of COVID-19 related public engagement campaigns. It does not include communications staff costs and other internal expenses.

In response to your second question, the list of paid mediums used are listed below:

- TV
- Press
- Radio (Commercial, Independent, Ethnic and Iwi)
- Digital audio (e.g. Digital Radio, Spotify and Podcasts)
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat)
- Programmatic Display (e.g. Banner ads on websites)
- Programmatic Video (e.g. YouTube and Advertising videos played before content)
- Video on Demand (e.g. TVNZ and ThreeNow)
- High Impact digital placements (Home page takeovers, digital publisher partnerships, e.g. Stuff, NZ Herald and MetService home page takeover)
- Out of Home (e.g. Billboards, street posters, street furniture, malls and airports)
- Search Engine Marketing (e.g. Increasing the visibility of the COVID-19 website when people undertake searches online for related topics)

In response to your third question, since March 2020 81 people have worked in the Communications and Public Engagement team within DPMC's COVID-19 Group. The length of time employees have worked has varied depending on the needs at the time, for example during times of changing alert levels extra staff capacity is required.

Over time position titles have changed, but the list below provides a summary of the position descriptions within the team:

- Head of Communications and Engagement
- Chief Advisor
- Manager Campaigns and Channels
- Manager Engagement
- Social Media Lead
- Senior Social Media Advisor*
- Social Media Co-ordinator*
- Web Lead
- Senior Web Advisor*
- Campaign Lead
- Vaccine Campaign Lead
- Senior Advisor Campaign
- Senior Advisor Content
- Advisor Content
- Principal Advisor
- Principal Advisor – Vaccine
- Media Lead
- Senior Communications Advisor*
- Principal Advisor Engagement
- Senior Advisor Engagement*
- Senior Advisor Maori Engagement
- Events, Partnerships and Activations Advisor
- Advisor Engagement*

*Multiple roles with this title

In response to your fourth question, please find below a list of agencies or private businesses engaged by DPMC to facilitate the COVID-19 public engagement campaigns.

Agency	Nature of work
OMD	Paid media strategic advice and media buying
Clemenger BBDO	Advertising strategic advice and creative development
Bright Sunday	Advertising creative agency targeted Pacific community
The Media Dept	Media buying
Creative Native	Maori Creative Agency
DIA	Translations of content and resources
Te Amokura Productions	Development of content targeted at Maori
Platform Advertising	Advertising and creative advice
Silverstripe	Support, development and hosting services to the COVID-19 website
Hotjar	Provides analytics and insights from COVID-19 website

Deaf Aotearoa	NZ Sign Language translations
Blind Low Vision NZ	Large Print and audio
Pacifica Education Centre	Pacific Translations
People First	Easy read translations
Milne Print	Printing services
Blue Star	Printing and distributions services
Hot Copy	Printing services
TRA	Sentiment research, concept testing, across New Zealand
Moana Research	Sentiment research focusing on ethnic communities
Daylight Creative	Development of video content to communicate key health behaviours
Mark Tantrum	Photography services
Muka and Honey	Maori design
BananaWorks	Marketing to Ethnic communities
Ezispak	Interpreting Services
2M	Translations
Straker	Translations
AI Comms	Large Print and Audio

In response to your fifth question, the goal of the campaign is to ensure people in New Zealand understand what they need to do under different COVID-19 Alert Levels, such as stay home, wear a mask, scan in the QR code; establish the Unite Against Covid-19 brand as a trusted source of information through consistency and reassurance; and keep people motivated to follow the rules.

In response to your last question regarding the risk factors or concerns of the campaign that have been identified. A key concern was to ensure people understand what they need to do in different COVID-19 Alert Levels, therefore information is provided through a range of different channels and translated into 22 languages, with messages kept simple and to the point. There is regular measurement through talking with key stakeholders, as well as regular research to ensure people are understanding the requirements, and willing to do what they need to. We make sure DPMC understands the public's concerns and questions so these can be addressed through communications.

The prevalence of misinformation and disinformation is also a concern. Therefore, we ensure information is reliable and, accessible and elevate reliable information so people have clarity about where to access information.

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



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Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Group