



24 March 2022

[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0914

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to the Cost of payments to influencers to promote Covid messages

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 28 January 2022. You requested:

*"I would like to make an OIA request around the payment towards, and number of, COVID-19 influencers and community champions. At a basic level I would like to know how much has been paid by MOH/government/DHBs towards COVID influencers or community champions to promote COVID messages.
A second part to the question is how many COVID influencers are there (paid or unpaid) or community champions. At a more detailed level I also request a breakdown of the names of the influencers (paid or unpaid) and how much they are paid."*

On 28 February 2022, the time limit for responding to your request was extended under section 15 of the Act by 20 working days because it necessitated consultations to be undertaken before a decision could be made on the request.

We have interpreted your request to be for the costs of the social media influences for the Unite Against COVID-19 Campaign and the Vaccine Campaign, held by DPMC.

Regarding the part of the request for the names of the social media influencers used to support the public campaigns, for the COVID-19 Vaccine campaign there were 11 content creators who were used to promote the vaccination message as part of the Super Saturday vaccination campaign. These individuals were Louis Davis, Jackie Cheng, Tyla Nathan-Wong, Kirstie Stanway, Nicole Whippy, Aya Al-chalabi, Nicole Goldsworthy, Jared Jackson, Win Velasco, Michael Fergus and Daniel Rhodes. These content creators were engaged to make and share their own authentic vaccine-related content that was relevant to them and their followers.

For the Unite Against COVID-19 Campaign there were 9 content creators to promote the message as part of the Summer Campaign – Summer Influencers and Be Prepared Campaign – Isolation Influencers. These individuals were Meagan Kerr, The Modern Singhs, Ralph Weekender, Janaye Henry, Jazz Thornton, Henry Waugh, James Roque, The Girls Uninterrupted and Haylee Clarke.

Regarding the part of your request for the cost of social media influencers, the use of social media influences to support the COVID-19 Vaccine campaign is via a contracted media agency. DPMC does not place requests with media outlets directly and the costs are not held in the DPMC financial system.

I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by the department and I do not believe that it is held by another public sector agency.

These campaigns are targeted to reach all people in New Zealand, communicating vital information including COVID Protection Framework (Traffic Light) and policy setting changes and the actions required by New Zealanders, as well as encouraging key public health behaviours.

New Zealand's COVID-19 communication approach has been internationally recognised, and it is acknowledged as one of the pillars of the country's successful COVID-19 response. There has been a focus on ensuring the public receive clear information through key channels to guide them through the different phases of the pandemic, taking the actions required at given time. In 2021, this included a comprehensive, multifaceted campaign to support the COVID-19 Vaccine rollout, ensuring communities across Aotearoa were well informed about the vaccine and motivated to protect themselves, their whānau, and community.

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

This response will 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



Cheryl Barnes
**Deputy Chief Executive,
COVID-19 Response**