



19 December 2022



Ref: OIA-2022/23-0269

Dear 

**Official Information Act request relating to DPMC documents that include information from The Disinformation Project**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 26 October 2022. You requested:

*Has The Disinformation Project or its key people, including Kate Hannah, Sanjana Hattotuwa and Kayli Taylor, contributed or produced or participated in the exchange of information for security briefings, threat assessments or intelligence reports, or via other other communications, sessions or activities, to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, or with any of DPMC's offices, ministers, executives, or its agencies, groups, committees, units or other entities?*

*Please supply relevant emails, minutes, memos, diary notes, contracts, transaction statements, budget notes, reports, records, or recordings from February 2020 to the present, involving The Disinformation Project and the DPMC's offices, ministers, executives, or its agencies, groups, committees, units or other entities.”*

On 9 November 2022, you refined your request to the following:  
*specific documents, such as for briefings or documents produced by DPMC, which included information contributed by The Disinformation Project from 1 June 2022 to 1 November 2022*

The time frame for responding to your request was subsequently extended under section 15A of the Act by 20 working days because consultations were needed before a decision could be made on the request. Following this extension, I am now in a position to respond.

The Department has identified the following two documents within scope of your request titled:

- Report: Christchurch Call Update: October 2022
- Weekly Update: 2022 Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit

I have decided to release the relevant, in scope parts of the document titled 'Weekly Update: 2022 Christchurch Call Leaders' Summit' via excerpt below.

**The Disinformation Project released a Report on Misogyny in New Zealand**

36. The Disinformation Project (TDP) has provided you, and a range of Members of Parliament, a research report entitled *Dangerous speech, misogyny, and democracy: A review of the impacts of dangerous speech since the end of the Parliament Protest*. We provide an overview of the report below as the report itself is lengthy and discursive; additionally, the report contains long lists of the keywords (drawn from user comments) TDP tracked, which are, by nature and quantity,

generally distressing, of low illustrative value, and in some cases intended to cause harm to you and others. We can provide the report to you should you wish to read it in full.

37. The report argues that speech conveying misogynist, violent, and intimidating language towards women is increasing and becoming normalised in the online spaces TDP monitor, including Telegram, and the spread from Telegram to the algorithms of Meta's platforms, Twitter, and YouTube. As noted above, TDP tracked the rise in this speech – referred to as information disorders - through keywords, and it categorises this speech as dangerous, given the risk its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of the targeted groups.

38. TDP outlines the New Zealand context, including the 'Nuremburg 2.0' list, the looming local government elections, and regulatory efforts (and remaining gaps) to protect individuals at risk of being targeted with online and offline harm, including harassment and violent crime.

39. The report delves into a specific rise in New Zealand of dehumanising language, connecting it to such language used against the Tutsi population in the lead up to and during the Rwandan Genocide. This content, proliferating on Telegram, but spreading to mainstream social media, directly breaches the very specific standards and monitored by Meta, Twitter, and YouTube.

40. In addition to a rise in dangerous speech directed at women and minorities, TDP notes the algorithmic amplification of toxic masculinity as the purported correct social order; women and minorities that challenge that order are deemed transgressive. To this end, the TDP emphasises that misogyny and gender-based online hate is not a gateway to violent extremism, but already within its remit.

41. TDP is concerned that the rise in gendered, hate-based dangerous speech, and disinformation-founded hostility towards women and minorities, is causing harm to women's participation in political life and public office. This in turn erodes democracy and social cohesion founded in diversity. TDP argues this harm is not being taken seriously enough. It provides six recommendations to address this harm, spanning: reviews of disclosure requirements for electoral legislation and the Companies Register; a joint Privacy Commission/Human Rights Commission work programme on published registers; a full review of legal remedies; a systems-wide approach to the Content Regulatory Review; and the establishment of a non-government entity to oversee information disorders and their impacts in New Zealand.

Please note that the final sentence from paragraphs 40 and 41 has not been included as these sentences are out of scope of your request.

On 29 November, The Disinformation Project released a copy of the report referred to and summarised in this excerpt. You can find a copy of this report here: <https://thedisinfoproject.org/2022/11/29/dangerous-speech-misogyny-and-democracy/>.

In regard to the document titled '*Report: Christchurch Call Update: October 2022*' I have decided to withhold in full the relevant parts of the document under the following section of the Act:

- section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future

Please find a link to some proactively released documents on the DPMC website on this general topic, these may be of interest and can be accessed here: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/national-security/counter-terrorism/national-centre-research-excellence/he-whenua-1>

A Weekly Report was also produced with a reference to the Disinformation Project, this has been published on the Department's website and can be accessed here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Reviews-and-audits/17-October-2022/COVID-19-Response-Weekly-Report-10-June-2022.pdf>

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



Tony Lynch  
**Deputy Chief Executive  
National Security Group**