



13 January 2023

[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2022/23-0399

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request for communications with Stuff regarding the project “Stuff: The Whole Truth” between 1 April 2021 and 1 January 2022

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 6 December 2022. You requested:

“1. In the “COVID-19 Disinformation and harmful content” document (dated 18 November 2021), section 29, it states: “The COVID-19 Group and the Ministry of Health also work jointly on providing guidance to the health sector, education sector, businesses, community leaders and the public on responding to COVID-19 mis- and disinformation.”

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffyi.org.nz%2Frequest%2F20099%2Fresponse%2F76770%2Fattach%2F5%2F4605435%2520RELEASE%2520COVID%252019%2520Disinformation%2520and%2520harmful%2520content.PDF.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cinformation%40dpmc.govt.nz%7C2aa5432081684c4933dd08dad76e691e%7Ceea6053309ef4b7a94060f38551cc613%7C0%7C0%7C638059166904183288%7CUnknown%7CTWfPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoIV2luMzliLCJBTiI6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C2000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ienyMV0PpQ9w3OiZObcir1hBcTypUEYpsLCmjRmaKDQ%3D&reserved=0>

2. In the same document in section 30, it states: “Examples of the COVID-19 communications activity to respond to misinformation include:”, and under a bullet point, “Supporting projects like Stuff: The Whole Truth”.

3. I would like to request all information associated with supporting the “Stuff: The Whole Truth” project, be it in the form of reports or communications or any other transmitted medium, between the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Stuff Limited over the period of 01 April 2021 and 01 January 2022.”

The “Stuff: The Whole Truth” project was independent of, and not funded by, the COVID-19 response. As is usual practice, media organisations can request verification of official information through existing media and communication channels and the Official Information Act process. During the period that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) was responsible for strategic communication and coordination and communications to address COVID-19 mis and disinformation, officials met with the Stuff project team. On 16 November 2022, that function moved from DPMC to the Ministry of Health.

We have undertaken a search of our systems and we have only identified one item, the email chain *Re: Catch up on COVID-19 vaccine programme support The Whole Truth*, within scope of your request.

I have decided to release this document, subject to information being withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 6(d), to maintain the safety of any person; and
- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals.

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

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



Julie Knauf
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Group

From: [Katie Kenny](#)
To: s6(d) [DPMC]
Subject: Re: Catch up on COVID-19 vaccine programme support The Whole Truth
Date: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 3:28:45 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi s6(d)

Here's a list of reporters working on The Whole Truth project (and their team leaders).

They've been asked to contact Kayt with project-related questions only. For other stories, they'll go to the media team as normal. I've also asked that they CC you and me.

Team leader: Keith Lynch
keith.lynch@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Brittney Deguara
brittney.deguara@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Nikki MacDonald
nikki.macdonald@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Cecile Meier
cecile.meier@stuff.co.nz

Team leader: Kate Newton
kate.newton@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Florence Kerr
florence.kerr@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Torika Tokalau
torika.tokalau@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Hannah Martin
hannah.martin@stuff.co.nz

Team leader: Carmen Parahi
carmen.parahi@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Thomas Manch
thomas.manch@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Michelle Duff
michelle.duff@stuff.co.nz

Reporter: Charlie Mitchell
charlie.mitchell@stuff.co.nz

On Wed, Jun 23, 2021 at 11:15 AM s6(d) [DPMC] <s6(d)@dpmc.govt.nz> wrote:

|

Hi Katie, yes we should be fine to go ahead and as it is on Teams we should be okay.

Look forward to speaking to you then.

s6(d)

From: Katie Kenny <katie.kenny@stuff.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 23 June 2021 10:58 am
To: s6(d) [DPMC] <s6(d)> @dpmc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Catch up on COVID-19 vaccine programme support The Whole Truth

Hi s6(d)

Are you still OK to meet today at 2pm?

On Fri, Jun 18, 2021 at 4:33 PM s6(d) [DPMC] <s6(d)> @dpmc.govt.nz wrote:

Hi all,

As a follow up from the meeting between MoH, Stuff and Medsafe last week and with Katie today; I have arranged this meeting for us to discuss how we can best support The Whole Truth project from a COVID response perspective.

Suggested agenda:

- Overview of The Whole Truth Project – (Stuff)
- How we can best support the project from a Ministry/COVID-19 response perspective – discussion
- Current disinformation narratives and expected emerging ones – s9(2)(a)
- What our communities are saying - s9(2)(a)

Please forward the invite to others who should be involved and let me know if you would like to add any other points.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

Nga mihi

s6(d)

COVID-19 Group

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

M s6(d)

dpmc.govt.nz



The information contained in this email message is for the attention of the intended recipient only and is not necessarily the official view or communication of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. If you are not the intended recipient you must not disclose, copy or distribute this message or the information in it. If you have received this message in error, please destroy the email and notify the sender immediately.

--

Katie Kenny

National Correspondent

s9(2)(a) | @kennykatie

Level 7 Spark Central, 42-52 Willis Street, Wellington Central, Wellington, 6011, New Zealand



The information contained in this e-mail message and any accompanying files is or may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, reliance, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail or any attached files is unauthorised. This e-mail is subject to copyright. No part of it should be reproduced, adapted or communicated without the written consent of the copyright owner. If you have received this e-mail in error please advise the sender immediately by return e-mail or telephone and delete all copies. Stuff does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in this e-mail or attached files. Internet communications are not secure, therefore Stuff does not accept legal responsibility for the contents of this message or attached files.

--

Katie Kenny

National Correspondent

s9(2)(a) | @kennykatie

Level 7 Spark Central, 42-52 Willis Street, Wellington Central, Wellington, 6011, New Zealand



The information contained in this e-mail message and any accompanying files is or may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, dissemination, reliance, forwarding, printing or copying of this e-mail or any attached files is unauthorised. This e-mail is subject to copyright. No part of it should be reproduced, adapted or communicated without the written consent of the copyright owner. If you have received this e-mail in error please advise the sender immediately by return e-mail or telephone and delete all copies. Stuff does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained in his e-mail or attached files. Internet communications are not secure, therefore Stuff does not accept legal responsibility for the contents of his message or attached files.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982