



7 February 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2022/23-0479

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to Covid-19 vaccine advertisements

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request partially transferred from Te Whatu Ora (TWO) on 12 January 2023.

You have requested:

1. *Copies of the final published versions of all static advertisement and promotional material, such as billboards, posters, fliers, and newspaper advertisements, related to the "COVID-19 vaccinations" and/or mRNA injections (such as Pfizer's mRNA injection product also known as "BNT162b2 RNA" or "Comirnaty") which were used by the Ministry of Health on the people of New Zealand in 2021 and 2022.*
2. *The dates when each of the above static advertisement and promotional materials were released or otherwise published by the Ministry of Health in 2021 and 2022.*
3. *The names of senior officials at the Ministry of Health which gave the final sign-off, checked the content, and approved the release each of the above static advertisement and promotional materials for publication.*
4. *The total cost of all advertisement and promotional publications related to the "COVID19 vaccinations" and/or mRNA injections, such as Pfizer's mRNA injection product also known as "BNT162b2 RNA" or "Comirnaty", which were used by the Ministry of Health with the aim of influencing the people of New Zealand in 2021 and 2022.*

An official from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) contacted you on 13 January 2023 to seek clarification of your request.

You responded with the following:

Part 1 is seeking the final (preferably the as-published copy) copies of all static advertisement and promotional material. For example, finalised and approved PDF or image-files which government departments or ministries sent to the marketing distributors, printers, and/or media companies for publication.

If this is unavailable (which is unlikely as a digital archive of all finalised advertising and promotional material should be routinely kept), then 'advertising copy' could be supplied which show the

approved messages which were selected for use on the people of New Zealand by the Ministry of Health.

Part 2 is seeking a 'publication date' for which the government or Ministry approved the version of each advertisement and promotional material to be released to the public via publication or displayed in public as a poster or billboard.

The date the final copy was sent to marketing distributors, advertising agencies, and media companies would be acceptable or the date the Ministry or other government agent approved the finalised advertisement and promotional material for release is also acceptable. The date the advertisement and promotional material was first published and seen by the public is also acceptable. Whatever date available in the records which is closest to a 'publication date' is acceptable as long as it is clear exactly what the date refers to in terms of final approval, distribution, or publication. If a publication/display date range is available in the records then provide that date range, for example "...this series of posters and billboards were displayed to the public between October 2021 and February 2022"

I am unsure of exactly how the workflows operated, but I assume someone at the Ministry of Health was officially approving a finalised version of each set of advertisement and promotional materials related to the "COVID-19 vaccinations" before it was sent for publication and distribution by the media companies. If this assumption is incorrect, can you provide the correct details about the process by which these government-funded advertisement and promotional materials were officially approved before publication.

As notified to you on 27 January 2022, DPMC does not hold information within scope of parts 1, 2 & 3 of your request, and has therefore transferred these parts to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

With regards to the last part of your request, for *the total cost of all advertisement and promotional publications related to the COVID-19 vaccines*, we have interpreted your request to be for total campaign costs for the COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign, by financial year.

I can advise that DPMC ran a COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign until 30 June 2022 at which point the responsibility transitioned to TWO. I note that MOH's National Immunisation Programme (NIP) also ran a COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign from 1 February to 30 June 2022, at which point the NIP transitioned to TWO.

We understand that on 12 January 2023, TWO advised you that DPMC held information relevant to your request until 30 June 2022. Information from 1 July 2022 and onwards is held by TWO and they will respond to you separately.

Following further discussion with TWO, and for completeness, we have included below the total amount spent on the DPMC COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign and the MOH NIP COVID-19 Vaccine Campaigns between 1 July 2020 and 30 November 2022 (inclusive). The spend for December 2022 is still yet to be finalised.

DPMC expenditure	2020/21 (1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021)	2021/22 (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022)	All vaccine campaign costs to 30 June 2022
Advertising	7,507,993	37,519,110	45,027,103
Website	42,464	0	42,464
Translations	99,625	271,822	371,447
Printing	1,690	0	1,690
Other	59,550	83,760	143,310
Total DPMC CAMPAIGN COSTS	7,711,322	37,874,692	45,586,014
Ministry of Health (MOH) / Te Whatu Ora (TWO) expenditure	2020/21	2021/22 (1 February – 30 June 2022)	2022/23 (1 July – 30 November 2022)
Targeted Digital		781,266	479,457
Media		0	2,432,833
Production		0	321,472
Total MOH/TWO CAMPAIGN COSTS		781,266	3,233,762

The extensive public information campaign to support New Zealand's fight against COVID-19 (including the highly transmissible Omicron variant), has been a critical part of supporting and informing New Zealanders throughout the pandemic.

The campaign is targeted to reach all people in New Zealand, communicating vital information as well as encouraging key public health behaviours regarding vaccinations for COVID-19. This has 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.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. 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



Katrina Casey
Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Group