



14 August 2023



Ref: OIA-2023/24-0009

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to Spending on the New Zealand COVID-19 Response

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request partially transferred from Treasury to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on 7 July 2023. You requested:

1) a copy of all estimates, budgets, and actuals for all direct and indirect spending on the NZ Covid response from 1 December 1999. So far as reasonably possible please break down by date ranges and purposes including for:

a) planning and strategy

*b) the "Unite Against Covid" response team and review of the Covid response
[...]*

*e) Cost of Covid communications marketing and advertising including on each of TV, radio, Print and social media and also direct and indirect cost of influencers and disinformation management
[...]"*

In respect to question 1, I can advise that details of Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet's budget and expenditure on the COVID-19 response are detailed in our Annual Reports for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. These reports can be accessed by the following links in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet COVID-19 budget and expenditure links

Year	Link	Budget and expenditure
2019/20	https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-12/dpmc-annual-report-2020.pdf	Non-departmental Other Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Welfare Costs • COVID-19 publicity campaign
2020/21	https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-10/dpmc-annual-report-2021.pdf	Non-departmental Other Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Welfare Costs Departmental appropriation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 All of Government Response
2021/22	https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-10/dpmc-annual-report-2022.pdf	Non-departmental Other Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Welfare Costs Departmental appropriation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 All of Government Response

The Estimates of Appropriations 2023/24 for Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet (<https://budget.govt.nz/budget/pdfs/estimates/v4/est23-v4-pmcab.pdf>) provide information relating to the 2022/23 final budget and forecast expenditure for the COVID-19 All of Government Response departmental appropriation. Following completion of the annual audit of DPMC later in 2023 the final expenditure for this appropriation will be available in the 2022/23 Annual Report published on the department's website. There was no funding in 2022/23 for the COVID-19 Civil Defence Emergency Management Costs.

In relation to part a) of your request, I have interpreted this as:

- excluding the COVID-19 Civil Defence Emergency Management Costs
- referring to the total Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet expenditure on all aspects of the COVID-19 response not related to delivery of the Unite Against COVID-19 campaign (ie includes the planning and strategy functions). This can be calculated through subtracting from the values available in the Table 1 links, the value of the expenditure on the Unite Against COVID-19 campaign (Table 2) and the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet expenditure on the Vaccine campaign (Table 3) for each year in question shown as in the tables below:

Table 2: Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet Unite Against COVID-19 campaign expenditure

Expenditure on Unite Against COVID-19 Campaign by year or category or total - ended 16 November 2022					
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23*	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Advertising	19,454,089	16,471,020	31,664,611	5,401,603	72,991,324
Advertising - Video/Script Production	0	145,615	0	0	145,615
Total Advertising	19,454,089	16,616,635	31,664,611	5,401,603	73,136,939
Website	468,845	577,036	504,181	173,289	1,723,350
Translations	290,479	211,105	568,383	168,533	1,238,500
Printing	215,067	632,868	563,987	6,100	1,418,021
Other	175,823	351,815	1,251,190	370,079	2,148,907
Total Other Publicity	1,150,214	1,772,824	2,887,741	718,000	6,528,779
TOTAL CAMPAIGN COSTS (excluding personnel)	20,604,303	18,389,459	34,552,352	6,119,604	79,665,718
Personnel and operating	2,695,697	9,504,281	5,261,634	2,556,890	20,018,503
ALL COSTS	23,300,000	27,893,740	39,813,987	8,676,494	99,684,221

* Note that all costs for 2022/23 are unaudited.

In delivering the Vaccine campaign using United Against COVID-19 channels, DPMC also incurred expenditure on behalf of the Ministry of Health, which was charged to Vote Health and therefore is not included in appropriation revenue and expenditure in DPMC's Annual Reports. Details of expenditure attributable to each Vote are outlined in table 3 below.

Table 3: Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet and Vote Health COVID-19 vaccine campaign expenditure through Unite Against COVID-19 channels

2020/21 Vaccine campaign including personnel for Unite Against COVID-19 channel expenditure \$				
Vote	Advertising	Other campaign	Personnel	TOTAL
Prime Minister and Cabinet	7,930,614	0	276,468	8,207,082
Health	29,588,496	355,582	221,942	30,166,020

2021/22 Vaccine campaign including personnel for Unite Against COVID-19 channel expenditure \$				
Vote	Advertising	Other campaign	Personnel	TOTAL
Prime Minister and Cabinet	0	0	0	0
Health	7,507,993	203,329	450,955	8,162,277

In respect to part b) of your request, the cost of Unite Against COVID-19 campaign personnel including other operating costs is shown in Table 2.

In relation to part e) of your request, I can advise that DPMC delivered the Vaccine campaign up to 30 June 2022 and the Unite Against COVID-19 campaign up to 15 November 2022.

The transfer of functions and responsibilities for the COVID-19 response from DPMC to relevant health agencies was completed by 30 March 2023.

Table 4 below details the campaign expenditure for the Vaccine campaign by categories. You asked that this information by type of media be provided, "So far as reasonably possible". DPMC is unable to break down these categories further than the categories below as the information is not held in that form in our finance system. I therefore consider that I have met your request through the information provided in Tables 2 and 4.

Table 4: Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet and Vote Health COVID-19 vaccine campaign expenditure through Unite Against COVID-19 channels by category

Expenditure on Vaccination Campaign by year or category or total - ended 30 June 2022				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Advertising	0	7,507,993	37,519,110	45,027,103
Advertising - Video/Script Production	0	0	0	0
Total Advertising	0	7,507,993	37,519,110	45,027,103
Website	0	42,464	0	42,464
Translations	0	99,625	271,822	371,447
Printing	0	1,690	0	1,690
Other	0	59,550	83,760	143,310
Total Other Publicity	0	203,329	355,582	558,911
TOTAL CAMPAIGN COSTS (excluding personnel)	0	7,711,322	37,874,692	45,586,014
Personnel		450,955	498,410.03	949,364.84
ALL COSTS		8,162,277	38,373,102	46,535,379

All figures referenced in Tables 1 to 4 exclude GST.

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



Clare Ward
Executive Director
Strategy, Governance and Engagement