



8 September 2023



Ref: OIA-2023/24-0116

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating for information related to the Covid-19 response

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 14 August 2023. You requested:

"Please provide information under the OIA to show:

- 1) which lives you saved including which age groups and time frames (refer quote below) and the cost benefit analysis of any such benefits compared to the social, mental, emotional and economic cost of the COVID response.*
 - 2) all budgets for the COVID response, money spent on the COVID response, and the source of funds for the COVID response*
 - 3) the inflationary effect of the COVID response and the deterioration in our freedoms, economy, hospital waiting lists and other measures of quality of life of New Zealanders.*
- "We stayed home, we made sacrifices, we got vaccinated and there is absolutely no question that we saved lives."*
- 4) Please also provide any briefings to you about this press release and any advice or analysis to brief you and and advise on the decision to end the COVID response; and*
 - 5) analysis to show possible or established causes of the excess deaths and heart issues including Myocarditis and Pericarditis in young and middle aged new Zealanders and any evidence establishing or excluding the provisionally consented PfizerVax as a possible cause or contributor of these deaths and heart injuries."*

For ease of response, I will be replying to each of your questions individually.

Question 1

This part of your request is not for official information per section 2 of the Act since no such cost benefit assessment exists. Therefore, I will not be responding to this part of your request.

You may be interested however, in the excess mortality data and statistics published on the Unite against COVID-19 and Statistics New Zealand websites, which show how death rates during the pandemic compare with the pre-pandemic period, including by age group. You can find information at: covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/research/ and www.stats.govt.nz/experimental/covid-19-data-portal.

Question 2

Information relating to the overall COVID-19 response budget is not held by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), therefore I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act. Ordinarily I would seek to transfer this part of your request to

another agency, however I note in this instance the information you have requested relates directly to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (CRRF).

Information regarding the CRRF, including funding allocation and expenditure is available on the Treasury website at: www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/covid-19-economic-response/overview-covid-19-response-and-recovery-fund-crrf#:~:text=The%20final%20size%20of%20the,%2458.4%20billion%20had%20been%20allo%20cated.

Question 3

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the requested information is not held by DPMC. Your request seeks information that crosses a range of agency portfolios and responsibilities. I have deemed it inappropriate to transfer this part of your request as I have been unable to determine an agency that would hold the requested information.

You may wish to consider refining your request by individual areas of interest and contacting the responsible agencies directly.

Question 4

Some briefings provided by the DPMC Policy Advisory Group to the Prime Minister have been identified as relevant to this part of your request. These briefings are provided to the Prime Minister in confidence to support him in his role as leader of the Government and chair of Cabinet.

These briefings are withheld in their entirety under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(f)(ii), to maintain collective and individual ministerial responsibility
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion
- section 9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding that information.

Question 5

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the requested information is not held by DPMC and is more closely related to the functions of Te Whatu Ora. Ordinarily I would transfer this part of your request to Te Whatu Ora, however I note your request was also received by the Prime Minister who has transferred this part of your request to Te Whatu Ora. I would therefore refer you to Te Whatu Ora's response which will be provided to you in due course as required under the Act.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decisions 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



Hayden Glass
Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Policy