



10 January 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0482

Tēnā koe

### Official Information Act request relating to Covid-19 timeline document request (2019-2022)

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 1 February 2026. You requested:

1. *“a copy of any day-by-day or similarly granular timeline, record, database, or internal document held by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet that outlines or summarises key events, decisions, policies, or actions taken in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, covering the period from 1 December 2019 to 31 December 2022.*
2. *Where available and relevant, I request that such timelines or records also identify the statutory basis for those decisions or actions, including the relevant Acts, regulations, orders, directions, or other legislative instruments under which they were made (for example, Orders in Council, COVID-19 Orders, or decisions made under the Health Act or COVID-19 Public Health Response Act), and where practicable, the specific sections or provisions relied upon.*
3. *This includes, but is not limited to:*
  - a. *Any master timeline maintained by DPMC or provided to Ministers;*
  - b. *Chronologies used for Cabinet briefings, internal coordination, or historical record-keeping;*
  - c. *Any consolidated or structured records intended to track government actions across that period.*
4. *If no single comprehensive timeline exists, I request instead:*
  - a. *Any documents that perform a similar function (for example, partial timelines, briefing chronologies, or compiled summaries); and*
  - b. *Confirmation of whether such a consolidated timeline was ever created or maintained.*

*If the requested information is held in multiple formats or systems, I am happy to receive it in any electronic form that is most convenient.*

*If any part of this request is likely to be refused under the Act, I ask that you consider whether the request can be refined or whether partial release is possible.*

*If this request is more closely connected with the functions of another government department or agency, I would appreciate your advice as to which agency is best placed to respond, and if possible, that you transfer this request to them under section 14 of the Official Information Act.”*

For ease of reference, I have numbered the parts of your request.

### Background

DPMC led the coordination of the all-of-government response to COVID-19 in its various phases for three years.

The arrangements for giving effect to the all-of-government coordination role evolved over time as the response and its needs evolved. There were three iterations:

- *March 2020 – June 2020*: the all-of-government response operated out of the National Crisis Management Centre (the NCMC). The NCMC was deactivated on 30 June 2020.
- *July 2020 – December 2020*: the AOG (All-of Government) COVID-19 Response Group was established as a business unit of DPMC, and
- *December 2020 – March 2023*: Cabinet approved ongoing funding and formalised the role of the unit which now became known as the COVID-19 Group (the Group). The Group acted as a central function responsible for oversight, integration, and coordination across the COVID-19 response system as a whole. It also provided assurance to Ministers and identified opportunities for continuous improvement in New Zealand's response.

Over the course of 2022/23, the Group's functions were transferred to Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) and Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health), who were responsible for the ongoing coordination of the COVID-19 response, with the Group winding up in March 2023.

### Information publicly available

We note that a significant amount of information relating to the COVID-19 response, and DPMC's role therein, is publicly available:

- **Timeline of Key Events and Activities produced by DPMC in 2023**  
This publicly available timeline summarises key events, decisions, policies, and actions taken in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic from 6 January 2020 to 20 October 2022: <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-10/pr-timeline-significant-events-activities.pdf>.
- **Decision-making documents**  
DPMC has proactively released the key documents that informed decision making throughout the COVID-19 response. These documents are organised chronologically and may be of interest to you:
  - <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/covid-19-response-2020>
  - <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/covid-19-response-2021>
  - <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/publications/covid-19-response-january-june-2022>.
- **Cabinet Paper on Establishing the COVID-19 Response Unit**  
This Cabinet paper provides further context on the establishment of the COVID-19 Group: <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-03/cab-20-sub-0100-establishing-covid-19-response-unit-paper-2.pdf>

The publicly available timeline, alongside the chronologically ordered decision-making documents, constitutes the relevant information identified as being within the scope of Parts 1–3 of your request. Accordingly, your request for this information is refused under section 18(d) of the Act – the information is publicly available.

For the periods 1 to 31 December 2019 and 21 October to 31 December 2022, your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act. This is because DPMC does not hold a timeline for these periods, and we do not have grounds to believe that such a document is held by, or more closely connected to the functions of, another department, Minister of the Crown, or organisation.

Finally, you will likely be aware that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic generated a significant volume of work, particularly during its early stages. A search of our databases confirmed that DPMC holds at least 5,000 documents related to COVID-19, though the actual number is likely considerably higher. Having assessed the scope of work required to collate any additional information potentially within scope of your request, I have decided to refuse this under section 18(f) of the Act. Extending the timeframe or imposing a charge would not mitigate the substantial manual effort required to collate the information.

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.

Nāku noa, nā



Annabel Ritchie  
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate**