



5 March 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0412

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to Multi-Stakeholder Group and The Disinformation Project

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 20 December 2025.

You requested:

"[...] all information relating to the assessment, formation, and funding justification for:

- *The Multi-Stakeholder Group to Strengthen Resilience to Disinformation*
- *The Disinformation Project (TDP) as referenced in OIA-2023/24-0859 (acknowledged on 30 October 2023) dpmc-roia-oia-2023-24-0859*

*My request specifically relates to due **diligence performed prior to, or as part of, any government funding decision**, regardless of whether The Disinformation Project operated as a formal legal entity.*

1. Due Diligence or Risk Assessment Material

Please provide:

a. Any due-diligence assessment, risk analysis, or compliance check carried out on:

- i. The Multi-Stakeholder Group*
- ii. Any individuals acting on behalf of The Disinformation Project*
- iii. Any associated host organisation(s), fiscal sponsors, or contracting entities*

b. Any documentation assessing reputational, legal, procurement, privacy, or security risk associated with the group or its members.

c. Any checks relating to:

- i. Conflicts of interest*
- ii. Political affiliations*
- iii. Independence of the group*
- iv. Financial suitability or capability to receive public funds*

If no due-diligence was undertaken, please confirm this explicitly.

2. Origin, Motivation and Formation of the Group

Please provide:

a. Records describing why this group was created, including any briefing papers or rationale documents.

b. Any correspondence discussing:

- i. external lobbying to form the group*
- ii. recommendations from NGOs, universities, media organisations, or international bodies*

c. Emails, memos or internal notes discussing who proposed its formation and why this format (unincorporated, advisory, or otherwise) was selected.

d. Any documents identifying who initiated or sponsored the collaboration, either inside or outside government.

3. *External Influence, Coordination, or Collaboration*

Please provide:

- a. *Copies of communications, proposals, letters, or briefing material from:*
 - i. *foreign governments*
 - ii. *NGOs*
 - iii. *private foundations*
 - iv. *academic institutions*
 - v. *media organisations*
 - vi. *international bodies (e.g., UN, WHO, EU, WEF, Five Eyes, Global Engagement Center, etc.)*

...relating to establishing, promoting, or recommending The Disinformation Project or associated working group.

This includes documents recommending members, methodology, purpose, or funding.

4. *Funding Justification and Evaluation*

Please provide:

- a. *Any documentation explaining the funding decision-making process, including evaluation criteria or procurement rule exemptions.*
- b. *Assessment of value for money, scope of deliverables, or capability evaluation prior to approving spending.*
- c. *Any records explaining why the funding pathway was provided to individuals or a non-incorporated group rather than an established entity.*

5. *Meeting Records and Advice Relating to Legitimacy or Accountability*

Please provide:

- a. *Minutes, briefing notes, or emails discussing governance arrangements, including:*
 - i. *whether the group should be incorporated*
 - ii. *whether a trust, charitable entity, consultancy, or university host should be used*
 - iii. *oversight or accountability mechanisms*
- b. *Any reviews, audit notes, or compliance reporting generated since funding approval.”*

On 10 February, we notified you of our decision to extend the timeframes for making a decision on your request by 19 working days. Following that extension, we are now in a position to respond.

We have interpreted your request as seeking information held by DPMC that was generated prior to the establishment of the Multi-Stakeholder Group to Strengthen Resilience to Disinformation (the Multi-Stakeholder Group) – first convened in July 2023.

Part 1 – Due diligence and risk assessment material

The Multi-Stakeholder Group to Strengthen Resilience to Disinformation was an Advisory Group to DPMC. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives would inform the group’s recommendations, DPMC sought members with a range of expertise, from sectors including research, law, Te Ao Māori, journalism, public policy, and community engagement. Due diligence for all members was conducted by assessing individuals’ credentials and expertise in relevant sectors. DPMC officials met with potential members to discuss the intended work of the Multi-Stakeholder Group before extending an invitation for membership.

Our previous response to you (OIA-2025/26-0391 refers) included the Procurement Plan for the work programme, the Terms of Reference, and the Conflict-of-Interest forms for the

members of the Multi-Stakeholder Group. No additional material has been identified as relevant to this part of your request.

Part 2 – Origin, motivation and formation of the group

Information about the origin, motivation, and formation of the Multi-Stakeholder Group is available on DPMC's website, along with the Terms of Reference: [Multi-Stakeholder Group to strengthen resilience to disinformation | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#). Furthermore, we have previously sent you the procurement plan for *Interim Initiatives to Respond to Disinformation*, which includes further information about the approach taken to the formation of the Multi-Stakeholder Group.

I note that the Multi-Stakeholder Group was created following Cabinet agreement in December 2022 to fund initiatives to respond to disinformation. Identified as in scope of this part of your request are the following briefings and Cabinet minute:

| Item | Date | Document description | Decision |
|------|------------------|--|--|
| 1 | 28 February 2023 | Update on work programme to strengthen resilience to disinformation (including Attachments A and B) | Release, some information withheld under s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(g)(ii), and s9(2)(j). |
| 2 | 13 December 2022 | Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation (including Attachments A-C) | Release, some information withheld under s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(g)(ii), and s9(2)(j). Attachment C withheld in full under s9(2)(g)(i). |
| 3 | 19 December 2022 | Additional Item: Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation (CAB-22-MIN-0604) | Release. |
| 4 | 11 November 2022 | Interim initiatives to counter disinformation | Release, some information withheld under s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(g)(ii), and s9(2)(j). |
| 5 | 14 October 2022 | Progressing a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand (including Attachments A-E) | Release, some information withheld under s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s9(2)(a), s9(2)(ba)(i), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(g)(ii), and s9(2)(j). Attachment E is out of scope. |
| 6 | 22 July 2022 | Update on work to counter and build resilience to disinformation (including Attachments A and B) | Release, some information withheld under s6(a), s9(2)(g)(ii), and s9(2)(j). Refuse Attachment A under s18(d). Attachment B is out of scope. |

We have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above to you, subject to some information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Act, as applicable:

- 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand

- 6(b)(ii), to protect the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by any international organisation
- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future
- 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion
- 9(2)(g)(ii), to prevent improper pressure or harassment of individuals if this information were to be released into the public domain
- 9(2)(j), to enable negotiations to be carried on without prejudice or disadvantage.
- 18(d), as the information requested is already publicly available.

Attachment A, refused under section 18(d) of the Act, is publicly available at the following link: Publicly available here: [https://www.brainbox.institute/projects/appropriate-frameworks-for-social-media-analysis%3A-report-for-the-department-of-prime-minister-and-cabinet-\(nz\)](https://www.brainbox.institute/projects/appropriate-frameworks-for-social-media-analysis%3A-report-for-the-department-of-prime-minister-and-cabinet-(nz)). Information that is out of scope of your request has been noted in the table above and marked accordingly on the attached documents.

Part 3 – External influence, coordination or collaboration

DPMC officials consulted a number of third parties in the development of advice on the establishment of the Multi-Stakeholder Group. This included verbal engagement with a range of non-government stakeholders across civil society, academia, and the media. Their views are summarised in the briefing titled *Progressing a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand* [DPMC-2022/23-170], which is covered by our response to Part 2 of your request above.

Identified as in scope of this part of your request is the following written submission from InternetNZ and a small number of accompanying emails:

| Item | Date | Document description | Decision |
|------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | October 2022 | Submission: 'Disinformation multi-stakeholder entity' | Release. |
| 2 | October-November 2022 | Emails between InternetNZ and DPMC | Release relevant parts, some information withheld under s9(2)(a) and s9(2)(g)(i). |

We have decided to release the relevant parts of these documents to you, subject to some information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the Act, as applicable:

- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals
- 9(2)(g)(ii), to prevent improper pressure or harassment of individuals if this information were to be released into the public domain.

Information that is out of scope of your request has been marked accordingly on the attached documents.

In making my decision with respect to Parts 2 and 3 of your request, 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 outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

Part 4 – Funding justification and evaluation

DPMC's advice regarding establishment of the Multi-Stakeholder Group and the allocation of funding towards it and other interim initiatives to strengthen resilience to disinformation is set out in the briefings covered in our response to Part 2 of your request above.

As the Multi-Stakeholder Group was an Advisory Group to DPMC, it did not fund any specific programmes or initiatives. There are therefore no records explaining funding pathways to individuals, other than the contracts and fees for the co-chairs and members of the Multi-Stakeholder Group, which we have covered in our previous response to you (OIA-2025/26-0391 refers).

Part 5 – Meeting records and advice relating to legitimacy or accountability

We have interpreted this part of your request to be seeking information about the governance arrangements for the Multi-Stakeholder Group. Our previous response to you (OIA-2025/26-0391 refers) included a link to the Terms of Reference for the Multi-Stakeholder Group, which is publicly available on DPMC's website:

<https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-07/Multi%20stakeholder%20group%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf>.

Also relevant to this part of your request is DPMC's advice regarding governance arrangements for the Multi-Stakeholder Group. This is set out in the briefings covered in our response to Part 2 of your request above.

Since the group did not have separate funding to allocate, no reviews, audit notes, or compliance reporting have been generated. The remainder of this part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Refusal of information related to the Disinformation Project

Finally, as stated in our prior response (OIA-2025/26-0391 refers), the Disinformation Project was a private, independent research organisation. Accordingly, DPMC does not hold any information related to its establishment and, as the Disinformation Project itself is not subject to the Act, we are unable to transfer your request to it for response. Therefore, the aspects of Parts 1 and 3 of your request that relate to the Disinformation Project are refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

While not in scope of your current request, DPMC has previously published a response under the Act concerning contracts we have had with the Disinformation Project in 2022 and earlier which may be of interest: <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-09/dPMC-roia-oia-2022-23-0804.pdf>.

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



Marika Hughes
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
National Security and Resilience



Coversheet

Briefing: Update on work programme to strengthen resilience to disinformation

| | | | |
|-------|------------|-----------------|--|
| Date: | 28/02/2023 | Report No: | DPMC-2022/23-949 |
| | | Security Level: | BUDGET-SENSITIVE UNCLASSIFIED |
| | | Priority level: | Low |

| | Action sought | Deadline |
|---|--------------------------|----------|
| Rt Hon Chris Hipkins Prime Minister Minister for National Security and Intelligence | Agree to recommendations | |

| Name | Position | Telephone | 1 st Contact |
|---------------|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tony Lynch | Deputy Chief Executive National Security Group | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | ✓ |
| s 9(2)(g)(ii) | Principal Policy Advisor | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | N/A |

| Departments/agencies consulted on Briefing |
|--|
| N/A. |

Minister's Office

Status:

Signed

Withdrawn

Comment for agency

Attachments: Yes

Briefing

Update on work programme to strengthen resilience to disinformation

To: Rt Hon Chris Hipkins
Prime Minister
Minister for National Security and Intelligence

| | | | |
|------|------------|----------------|--|
| Date | 28/02/2023 | Security Level | BUDGET-SENSITIVE UNCLASSIFIED |
|------|------------|----------------|--|

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the work programme to strengthen New Zealand's resilience to disinformation. DPMC proposes to continue with this work programme, which has two components:
 - procurement activities to deliver initiatives to respond to disinformation
 - convening an external multi-stakeholder group to explore potential for a non-government entity to strengthen resilience to disinformation affecting New Zealand.
2. This paper seeks your agreement for DPMC to continue with this work. DPMC would welcome an opportunity to discuss this work with you at a future National Security and Intelligence meeting.

Executive Summary

3. Disinformation¹ poses a threat to New Zealand's social cohesion, democratic norms, and national security. These challenges were evident in the response to COVID-19 and the Parliament occupation. New Zealand faces a challenging economic outlook and a long road to recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle. Economic uncertainty, hardship, and fear can make people more susceptible to disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories. Disinformation can make it more difficult for society to reach the consensus necessary to unite in response to collective challenges, such as climate change or significant infrastructure investment.
4. There is currently a very limited, emergent, and dispersed capability to analyse and understand disinformation narratives in New Zealand's online information ecosystems. This undermines the ability for government and others across society to understand the extent of the problem and undertake effective action to counter disinformation and build societal resilience to its harms.

¹ For the purposes of this briefing, the term 'disinformation' is used as a catch-all term to refer to the spectrum of false and misleading information. 'Disinformation' typically refers to false and misleading information shared with intent to cause harm, whereas the sharing of 'misinformation' typically implies the absence of harmful intent. These definitions can be challenging to apply to real examples, as intent often needs to be inferred from context. Distinguishing unwitting participants from deliberate and coordinated harmful behaviour will continue to present a challenge.

Policy work on a potential response

5. In 2022, your predecessor as Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (PM Ardern), progressed policy work on a potential response to disinformation. This focused on a proposal to establish a non-government entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation and influence operations affecting New Zealand. A Budget 2023 initiative has been submitted for establishment and operating costs for the proposed non-government entity.
6. Work to take forward the proposal, including key design decisions about its scope and form, would be led by a multi-stakeholder group of non-government experts, with government limited to convening, supporting and funding the work. In due course, government would have to decide whether to fund a proposal developed by the multi-stakeholder group (either through Budget 2023 or subsequent budgets).
7. DPMC considers this approach is preferable if enhanced buy-in from external stakeholders, social license, and political neutrality is prioritised. The trade-off is that this approach risks being slower, stakeholders may struggle to reach consensus, and government would have reduced control over the eventual landing zone for any proposal.

Cabinet approved funding for interim initiatives

8. Recognising the proposed entity would take time to develop, and funding through Budget 2023 to implement, in December 2022 Cabinet approved \$4.9m of funding for interim initiatives to maintain and build capability outside government to better coordinate, understand, and respond to disinformation. This capability could then support a more enduring response funded by the substantive Budget 2023 initiative. Further information on the interim initiatives is provided in **Attachment A**.

Upcoming activity

9. DPMC is proceeding with stakeholder engagement and procurement activities to progress the interim initiatives and convene a multi-stakeholder group. DPMC proposes to continue this work.
10. Further advice can be provided if you would like regarding the Budget 2023 initiative for establishment and operating costs for the proposed non-government entity.
11. As this work programme reflects a broad national interest in resilience to disinformation, DPMC recommends seeking cross-party understanding and, if appropriate, support. Further advice can be provided on request to support cross-party consultation or to add it to the agenda for a meeting of the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC).

Recommendations

We recommend you:

1. **note** that Cabinet has agreed a fiscally neutral funding transfer of \$4.9m in 2022/23 to enable DPMC to deliver initiatives to respond to disinformation [CAB-22-MIN-0604]

2. **note** these initiatives include the following, as agreed by your predecessor as Prime Minister [DPMC-2022/23-500]:

- procuring disinformation landscape monitoring and insights
- support for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress a proposed non-government entity to monitor disinformation affecting New Zealand
- support to establish a journalistic and civil society fact checking network
- education and community resilience building initiatives
- initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability
- agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives.

3. **note** that your predecessor as Prime Minister made an invited Budget 2023 submission for an initiative for establishing and funding a non-government entity to undertake monitoring disinformation and influence operations affecting New Zealand [DPMC-2022/23-619]

4. **note** your predecessor as Prime Minister directed DPMC to convene a multi-stakeholder group that would be empowered to drive and lead the work to design the proposed non-government entity, with government limited to playing a convening and funding role [DPMC-2022/23-170]

5. **agree** DPMC continue progressing work to convene a multi-stakeholder group to drive and lead the work to design the proposed non-government entity **YES / NO**

6. **agree** DPMC continue with procurement activities to deliver initiatives to respond to disinformation **YES / NO**

7. **note** DPMC recommends cross-party consultation on work to strengthen resilience to disinformation

8. **indicate** whether you would like DPMC to provide further advice to:

8.1. support a meeting with the leaders of other political parties about work to strengthen resilience to disinformation **YES / NO**

AND / OR

8.2. add a discussion about work to strengthen resilience to disinformation to the agenda for a future meeting of the Intelligence and Security Committee. **YES / NO**



Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group

28/02/2023

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins
Prime Minister
Minister for National Security and
Intelligence

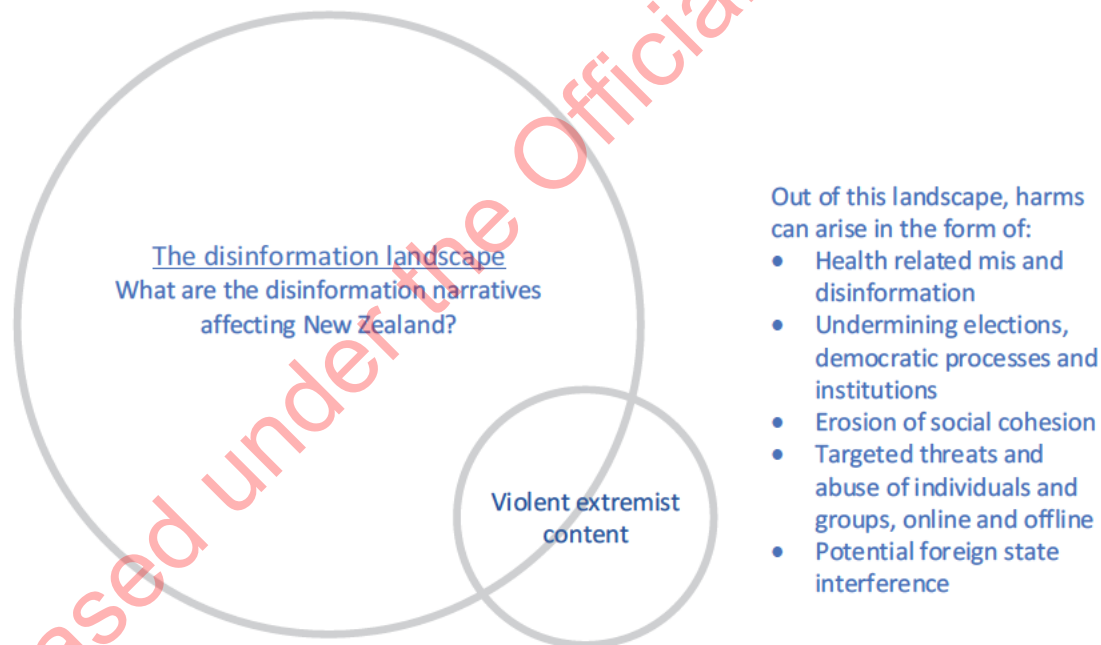
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Released under the Official Information Act 1982

The challenge posed to New Zealand by disinformation

12. There is currently a very limited, emergent, and dispersed capability to analyse and understand disinformation narratives in New Zealand's online information ecosystems, and how these narratives can interact with other factors to cause harm. This undermines the ability for government and others across society to undertake effective action to respond to disinformation and build resilience to its harms. This poses risks to New Zealand's national security, democratic norms, and social cohesion.
13. The National Security Survey undertaken as part of the National Security Long-term Insights Briefing found that, of the threats New Zealanders are most worried about, they were particularly concerned about mis- and disinformation (84%). Recent research undertaken by DPMC through Kantar found 79% of those surveyed felt that the spread of false and misleading information was a risk to democracy in New Zealand.²
14. COVID-19 disinformation has provided a vehicle for a range of other disinformation narratives and conspiracy theories to spread. The rhetoric espoused, online and offline, has become increasingly extreme and anti-authority. Material normally associated with white identity extremist and anti-authority movements is now found in disinformation and conspiracy-theory groups previously focused on vaccines and vaccine mandates. Narratives have shifted to other causes as measures to mitigate COVID-19 have eased.
15. The following diagram illustrates the overlap between the broad disinformation landscape and its violent extremist sub-component:

Diagram 1: The disinformation landscape



² The National Security Survey period covered 11 February – 2 March 2022, which overlapped with the protest action at Parliament. The timing of the survey is likely to have impacted results. The Kantar Survey was conducted August to September 2022. Survey size: n2,500.

The problems have the potential to get worse

16. Online environments and the time people spend in them may continue to grow. New and emerging technology may increase the harms caused by disinformation and could escalate the problem rapidly. This includes recent developments in generative artificial intelligence and synthetic media such as 'deepfakes'. There is the potential for these technologies to be weaponised by bad actors to further leverage the power of social media at the expense of democracy and civil society. At the same time, new technology will also present opportunities to identify and respond to disinformation. Greater public awareness of the issues and digital savvy among younger generations may increase protection over time.
17. Disinformation is part of a broader digital resilience challenge for liberal democracies around the world, as they struggle to navigate the negative effects of disruptive technologies while preserving their openness and fundamental freedoms. There is a spectrum of online harms, of which the vast majority of disinformation is legal and fits within definitions of protected or political speech – making it difficult and/or inappropriate to address using traditional law enforcement and intelligence tools before the harms become apparent. New regulatory tools have been difficult to develop internationally. New Zealand is currently considering its own regulatory response to online harms through the Content Regulatory Review led by the Minister for Internal Affairs.
18. Commentators have observed that the underlying root causes for the spread of disinformation in New Zealand are long term and intergenerational. For example, economic inequality, distrust of government and its institutions, and the legacy of colonisation. Enduring solutions therefore reach far beyond the national security sector, into the education, social development and health portfolios. The policy responses set out in this briefing are intended as an initial step to improve awareness and understanding of the problem and lay the foundation for a longer-term response.

Disinformation and the cyclone recovery

19. Economic uncertainty, hardship, and fear can make people more susceptible to disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories. The spread of disinformation can make it harder for society to reach the consensus necessary to unite in response to collective challenges, such as climate change or significant infrastructure investment.
20. There have been instances of false and misleading information circulating on social media about cyclone-affected areas, exacerbated by disruption to telecommunications services. Ensuring timely and accurate information is available to people, and responding to false and misleading information where appropriate, will continue to be an issue for authorities involved in the recovery effort. More broadly, some media reporting has linked initial scepticism about cyclone forecasts, warning, and preparatory measures, to the disinformation ecosystem which developed around the COVID-19 response.

A work programme to strengthen resilience to disinformation

A whole of society response is needed, with government playing its part

21. PM Ardern progressed policy work on the basis that governments should not work to address the harms of disinformation alone. Successfully countering disinformation and building societal resilience to its harms requires "whole of society" solutions. A multi-stakeholder approach that includes working with Māori and Iwi, media, academia, civil society, the private sector, and a diverse range of communities, will be essential in getting ahead of disinformation campaigns and countering them effectively.

22. A multi-stakeholder approach would bring different perspectives together to participate in discussion, decision making, and implementation of the response to the jointly perceived problems posed by disinformation. If multiple stakeholders can contribute their expertise towards decisions, the eventual entity would have greater legitimacy and be more effectively implemented than a traditional state-developed response. Working with a broad set of stakeholders should enable solutions to be developed that draw on a range of tools, while protecting human rights and freedoms, including promoting a free, open and secure internet.
23. This approach would help to mitigate both actual risks that might arise from centralising responses to disinformation within government, and perception risks. The latter being that efforts by government agencies to understand and respond to disinformation are mischaracterised as an exercise in mass state surveillance or control of New Zealanders' social media communications.

A proposal for a non-government entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation affecting New Zealand

24. In 2022, PM Ardern progressed policy work focused on a proposal to establish a non-government entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation and influence operations affecting New Zealand [DPMC-2021/22-2526 and DPMC-2022/23-170 refer].
25. The media and independent researchers have been instrumental in informing the New Zealand public about the aspirations of disinformation and conspiracy groups in the 2022 local government elections and raising awareness more generally. Improved monitoring and insights are now needed to better understand the problem, including the transition chains and networks for disinformation across different online platforms, who is being targeted, who the threat actors are, and the role of algorithmic amplification and monetisation.
26. This monitoring capability outside government would be complementary to and maintain the focus of the national security community on the nexus of disinformation with more acute national security challenges where it has a clear mandate, such as violent extremism, foreign interference and malicious cyber activity. Disinformation will continue to pose challenges for a range of other agencies and portfolio interests.

A multi-stakeholder group would take forward the proposal

27. PM Ardern directed work to take forward the proposal, including key design decisions about its scope and form, be led by a multi-stakeholder group of key non-government experts, with government limited to convening, supporting and funding the work.
28. DPMC considers this approach is preferable if enhanced buy-in from external stakeholders, social license, and political neutrality is prioritised. The trade-off is that this approach risks being slower, stakeholders may struggle to reach consensus, and government by design would have reduced control over the eventual landing zone for the proposal.
29. In due course, government would reach a decision point as to whether to fund the proposal developed by the multi-stakeholder group (either through the Budget 2023 initiative outlined below or through a subsequent budget in future). Other funding sources may also be leveraged if appropriate, including from philanthropic sources and the private sector.

A Budget 2023 initiative to fund the proposed entity has been submitted

30. Following receipt of advice from DPMC [DPMC-2022/23-619], on 19 December 2022 PM Ardern submitted a letter to the Minister of Finance detailing her response to invited

Budget 2023 initiatives. The two Budget 2023 Vote PMC initiatives for Countering Foreign Interference included:

- monitoring disinformation and influence operations affecting New Zealand; and
- enhancing infrastructure resilience (you will receive separate advice on this work programme).

31. The disinformation monitoring Budget 2023 initiative seeks \$23m of funding over four years for establishment and operating costs for the proposed non-government entity. The initiative includes funding for additional FTEs within government to provide coordination and a systems approach across government using the entity's insights.
32. To help DPMC direct its efforts, this briefing seeks a steer on your view on the Budget 2023 disinformation initiative. PM Ardern had requested DPMC develop further scaled options for both initiatives in addition to the those in the original budget submissions. Further advice can be provided on request.

Cabinet has approved funding for a range of interim initiatives

33. On 19 December 2022, Cabinet agreed to a fiscally neutral transfer within Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet of \$4.9 million to fund a range of interim initiatives to start in early 2023 [CAB-22-MIN-0604], with funding available to carry forward to 2023/24 once committed.
34. The interim initiatives include:
- procuring disinformation landscape monitoring and insights
 - support for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress a potential non-government entity to monitor disinformation
 - support for a journalistic and civil society fact checking network
 - education and community resilience building initiatives
 - development of domestic expertise and capability.
35. Further information on these initiatives is provided in a table at **Attachment A**. The initiatives are intended to be mutually reinforcing of each other and reflect what DPMC has learned from responses to disinformation among like-minded international partners [DPMC-2022/23-500].
36. The interim initiatives are intended to maintain and build capability outside government to better coordinate, understand, and respond to disinformation, and to inform the work of the multi-stakeholder group. This capability could then support a more enduring response if funded by the substantive Budget 2023 initiative.

Activity planned over 2023

37. To progress the interim initiatives and convene a multi-stakeholder group, DPMC intends to undertake the following activities:
- Ongoing – Further stakeholder engagement about the work programme
 - March/April 2023 – Hire a project team to procure and implement the interim initiatives, and provide a secretariat function to the multi-stakeholder group
 - April 2023 – Identify stakeholders and convene the multi-stakeholder group, noting DPMC intends to reimburse people for their time and contribution to the work
 - May 2023 – Announce the \$4.9m 'Disinformation Resilience Fund'

- May 2023 – Commence procurement of interim initiatives (e.g. request for proposals)
 - May to December 2023 – Multi-stakeholder group develops the proposal for a non-government entity to monitor disinformation in New Zealand
 - Early 2024 – Government decides whether to fund the proposal developed by the multi-stakeholder group (assuming funding is allocated through Budget 2023)
 - 2024 – the non-government entity is established and commences operations.
38. DPMC proposes, subject to your views, to proceed with this work programme. DPMC would welcome any feedback as to how closely you and your office wish to be engaged on this work programme as it proceeds
39. **Attachment B** provides a list of the groups and individuals DPMC intends to approach to explore involvement in a multi-stakeholder approach. This is based on previous advice to PM Ardern and initial discussion with stakeholders. DPMC does not envisage the group would be a formal ministerial advisory group, and it would therefore not be appropriate for a Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (APH) process. However, DPMC does intend to reimburse participants in accordance with the fees framework for members appointed to bodies in which the Crown has an interest [CO (22) 2 refers].

Cross-party political support would help to mitigate risks

40. As this work programme reflects a broad national interest in resilience to disinformation, DPMC recommends seeking cross-party understanding and, if appropriate, support. This would also help to mitigate the risk this work becomes framed as a partisan initiative. Further advice can be provided on request to support a meeting with your political counterparts to inform them of, and consult them on, this work programme, or to add it to the agenda for a meeting of the Intelligence and Security Committee.
41. DPMC has supported some preliminary engagements that have occurred on the harms posed by disinformation through the Intelligence and Security Committee and the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee.

Next steps

42. This paper seeks your agreement for DPMC to continue with the work outlined. DPMC would welcome an opportunity to discuss this work and any feedback you may have at a future National Security and Intelligence meeting.

| Attachments: | Title | Security classification |
|---------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Attachment A: | Interim initiatives to counter disinformation | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment B: | Individuals and groups to involve in a multi-stakeholder approach | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |

Attachment A: Interim initiatives to counter disinformation

43. Table 1 (below) lists the interim initiatives to respond to disinformation by approximate order of priority. The individual initiatives are intended to be mutually reinforcing of each other; for example, monitoring and insights helps to inform fact checking. These could be framed together as a potential 'Fund to strengthen resilience to disinformation' or undertaken individually.

44. Costs are high level estimates, and initiatives will be scaled to reflect the capacity of providers. Procurement would help to identify what is out there, who can deliver it, and how best to deliver value for money including by identifying where providers can leverage other funding sources against the government's contribution.

Table 1: Interim initiatives to counter disinformation ahead of substantive Budget 2023 bid

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|----------|--|---|---|
| 1 | Disinformation landscape monitoring and insights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of open-source data on narratives, growth trends, and emerging threats. General monitoring could identify leads for deeper dives on particular areas of concern e.g. disinformation narratives affecting the 2023 General Election. Strengthened domestic capability could then support the proposed non-government disinformation entity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic – s 9(2)(j) International – s 9(2)(j) |
| 2 | Support for a multi-stakeholder approach to establish the proposed non-government entity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure a leader to convene a series of initial meetings of key stakeholders to further develop the entity proposal, ahead of the Budget 2023 bid. Reimburse key stakeholders for their time contributed to the work. Interim support services as required (project management, analysis, secretariat). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer Attachment B for an initial list of individuals and groups to involve in a multi-stakeholder approach |
| 3 | Fact checking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a civil society and journalistic initiative to establish a fact checking network in New Zealand based on international best practice. Could undertake fact checking in relation to disinformation affecting the 2023 General Election and support the work of the New Zealand Electoral Commission. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journalists, academia, and civil society organisations (Note: s 9(2)(j)) |

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|----------|--|--|---|
| 4= | Education and community resilience initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support existing and new community-based initiatives to provide education and resilience building, media literacy etc.• Could focus on communities where there is an identified need e.g. Māori and Pasifika, school children, seniors etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• s 9(2)(j)• Maori and Iwi organisations |
| 4= | Initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiatives to support the development of best practice disinformation monitoring and resilience building in New Zealand, including expertise, skills, and tools.• Commission work to understand what international assistance and support in building a local capability might look like and how local nuances would be approached, ahead of any potential international procurement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore domestic and international providers |
| N/A | Agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement processes, contract monitoring, stakeholder management.• To prime the market and support an effective request for proposals, government could commission a review of the domestic environment to ascertain who is doing what and existing levels of capability. This may identify additional providers beyond those government is already aware of, and in turn make them aware of the funding opportunity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A – DPMC to lead. |

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Attachment B: Individuals and groups to involve in a multi-stakeholder approach

45. At this stage, DPMC intends to explore the potential for involvement by the following groups and individuals, noting not all will necessarily be available, and that potential membership may evolve further:

s 9(2)(j)



- A legal expert, with experience of NZ human rights legislation, privacy issues and internet regulation, and/or a representative of the judiciary
- Media representative(s), such as a journalist with a professional interest in disinformation, or head of a major newsroom.

46. While DPMC envisions a tight core grouping of approximately 5-10 members, this size would make it challenging to incorporate all perspectives impacted by the problems posed to society by disinformation. To ensure broad input to their work, DPMC envisions supporting the stakeholder group to partner and consult with a range of other groups. For example:

- Iwi Chairs representatives;³
- representatives of specific communities at risk of harm from disinformation (and/or at risk of harm from surveillance, censorship, or moderation of the information environment);
- other civil society organisations that might serve as important external critics of the work

s 9(2)(g)(i)

³ DPMC has engaged with an Iwi Chairs Forum working group on the challenges of responding to disinformation.

- various independent Crown entities and self-regulatory agencies with experience in balancing freedom of expression against other rights s 9(2)(g)(i)

47. DPMC envisions limited government engagement in the stakeholder group itself, but that DPMC would support a structured consultation and engagement process with interested government agencies.

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Coversheet

Briefing: Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation

| | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Date: | 13/12/2022 | Report No: | DPMC-2022/23-605 |
| | | Security Level: | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| | | Priority level: | High |

| | Action sought | Deadline |
|--|--|------------|
| Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister | agree to take an oral item to Cabinet to give effect to the recommendations | 19/12/2022 |

| Name | Position | Telephone | | 1 st Contact |
|---------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tony Lynch | Deputy Chief Executive, National Security Group | s9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | ✓ |
| s 9(2)(g)(ii) | Senior Advisor, Security and Intelligence Policy | s9(2)(g)(ii) | s9(2)(g)(ii) | |

| Departments/agencies consulted on Briefing |
|--|
| The Treasury |

Minister's Office

Status:

Signed

Withdrawn

| |
|---------------------------|
| Comment for agency |
|---------------------------|

Attachments: Yes

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Briefing

Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation

| | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| To: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister | | | |
| Date | 13/12/2022 | Security Level | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |

Purpose

1. This paper seeks your agreement to table an oral item at Cabinet on 19 December 2022 to seek Cabinet's agreement to reallocate funding to support initiatives to respond to disinformation.

Executive Summary

2. The oral item would seek Cabinet's agreement to rescind a previous Cabinet decision for 2022/23 underspend from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation "COVID-19 All of Government Response" to be returned to the centre and to agree to apply \$4.9 million to a programme of work to respond to disinformation within Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet.
3. This would give effect to your decision to pursue funding for interim initiatives to counter disinformation [DPMC-2022/23-500 refers], which you have discussed previously with the Minister of Finance.

Recommendations


We recommend you:

1. **note** that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) forecast approximately \$14 million underspend for 2022/23 in the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response;
2. **note** on 22 November 2021 Cabinet agreed that any baseline funding in the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation for 2022/23 not required to support the government's response to COVID-19 be returned to the centre [DEV-21-MIN-0235 and CAB-21-MIN-0487];

3. **note** that on 5 December Cabinet agreed an exception to apply funding over two years for hosting of the all of Government response to the Royal Commission which is within scope of the existing COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation [CAB-22-MIN-0552];
4. **note** that there is an opportunity to apply in a fiscally neutral manner \$4.9 million of underspend in 2022/23 towards initiatives to respond to disinformation which are outside the scope of the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation;
5. **note** that the 21 November 2021 Cabinet decision referred to in recommendation 2 above means that joint Ministers do not have the authority to authorise the transfer between appropriations and Cabinet approval must be sought;
6. **agree** to table an oral item at Cabinet on Monday 19 December to agree to apply \$4.9 million of underspend for 2022/23 from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response to initiatives to respond to disinformation within the Vote Prime Minister Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA;
7. **note Attachment A** contains talking points to support your oral item at Cabinet and **Attachment B** contains recommendations to table at Cabinet to give effect to recommendation 6 above;
8. **note** this oral item would give effect to your decision to pursue funding for interim initiatives to counter disinformation in advance of an invited Budget 2023 submission [DPMC-2022/23-500 refers], which you have discussed previously with the Minister of Finance;
9. **agree** to refer this paper to the Minister of Finance for his information.

YES / NO

YES / NO


Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group

13/12/2022


Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister

...15.12.22

Background

10. COVID-19 disinformation and the groups who espouse it have changed over time to provide a vehicle for other false and misleading narratives. This poses an ongoing challenge to New Zealand's national security and social cohesion.
11. On 4 November 2022, you received advice on interim initiatives to counter disinformation [DPMC-2022/23-500 refers], as detailed in **Attachment A**. You discussed with the Minister of Finance and agreed to further pursue funding for the following initiatives:
 - Disinformation landscape monitoring and insights
 - Support for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress the proposed non-government entity to monitor disinformation in New Zealand
 - Fact checking
 - Education and community resilience initiatives
 - Initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability
 - Agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives.
12. The initiatives are intended to help maintain and develop domestic capability outside government to understand and respond to the disinformation landscape, commencing from early 2023. This capability could then form the basis of a more enduring and consolidated structure through the proposed non-government entity to monitor disinformation in New Zealand.
13. The proposed non-government entity is the subject of a Countering Foreign Interference invited Budget 2023 initiative on which you have received separate advice [DPMC-2022/23-619]. The Budget 2023 submission excludes funding in 2022/23. Due to the urgency of this work requiring an earlier decision and release of funds in advance of Budget 2023 decisions.
14. You directed officials to provide further advice on the most appropriate mechanism and Ministerial approvals required to give effect to any transfer or repurposing of funding from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet's COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation to this programme of work. DPMC has consulted with Treasury to develop this advice.

Previous Cabinet decisions agreed to return COVID-19 response funding to the centre

15. On 22 November 2021 Cabinet agreed that any baseline funding in the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation for 2022/23 not required to support the government's response to COVID-19 be returned to the centre [DEV-21-MIN-0235 and CAB-21-MIN-0487].
16. This Cabinet decision overrides the general authority in Cabinet Office circular (18) 2 for joint Ministers to agree changes to baselines with no financial implications. Therefore, a Cabinet decision will be necessary to rescind the previous decision and agree to apply funding from

the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation towards initiatives to respond to disinformation.

17. DPMC forecast approximately \$14 million underspend for 2022/23 in the departmental output expense appropriation "COVID-19 All of Government Response". This funding was initially appropriated from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.
18. From the \$14 million underspend, on 5 December 2022 Cabinet agreed \$2.407 million to establish and host an all-of-government coordination team in DPMC for the duration of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the lessons learned from New Zealand's response to COVID-19 and that of this, \$1.699 million was transferred to 2023/24 [CAB-22-MIN-0552 refers]. This is within the scope of the existing COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation.
19. We propose that an additional \$4.9 million from the remaining forecast underspend be applied to give effect to your decision to pursue funding for initiatives to respond to disinformation. This would require a transfer of funding within Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet appropriations.

Oral item at Cabinet

20. Officials recommend you take an oral item to Cabinet on Monday 19 December to seek Cabinet approval to agree to apply \$4.9 million of underspend for 2022/23 from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response to the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation, to the Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA for initiatives to respond to disinformation.
21. Any remaining unspent, or uncommitted, 2022/23 funding in DPMC for the COVID-19 Response appropriation will be returned to the Crown. Further, any unused balance from the \$4.9 million will not be applied to any other purpose.
22. Funding is likely to need to extend beyond 2022/23 due to the level of spend and procurement requirements.¹ Therefore, we recommend seeking in-principle agreement to carry forward any 2022/23 underspend in the \$4.9 million to 2023/24 to ensure funding remains available for this work.
23. **Attachment B** contains recommendations for you to table at Cabinet to give effect to these financial adjustments. Attachment C contains suggested talking points for the oral item.

Next steps

24. If you agree to the recommendations, we will work with your office to progress the oral item to Cabinet.

¹ The intention to procure monitoring of disinformation during 2023 could be compromised without certainty of funding beyond June 2023. This could also be damaging to our supplier relationships and the attempt to build an enduring response to disinformation if contracts are insignificant or cut short.

25. Subject to Cabinet's approval, DPMC's National Security Group (NSG) will proceed to implement these initiatives and provide further advice as required. NSG proposes to begin procuring this work in early 2023.

| Attachments: | Title | Security classification |
|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Attachment A: | Interim initiatives to counter disinformation | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment B: | Recommendations to be tabled for oral item at Cabinet, 19 December 2022 | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment C: | Talking points for oral item at Cabinet, 19 December 2022 | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |

**Attachment C is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA.*

Attachment A: Interim initiatives to counter disinformation

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Estimated cost (scalable) | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|----------|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Disinformation landscape monitoring and insights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of open-source data on narratives, growth trends, and emerging threats. General monitoring could identify leads for deeper dives on particular areas of concern eg. disinformation narratives affecting the 2023 General Election. Strengthened domestic capability could then support the proposed non-government disinformation entity. | \$0.4m - \$1m | Domestic – s 9(2)(j) International – s 9(2)(j) |
| 2 | Support for a multi-stakeholder approach to establish the proposed non-government entity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure a leader to convene a series of initial meetings of key stakeholders to further develop the entity proposal, ahead of the Budget 2023 bid. Reimburse key stakeholders for their time contributed to the work. Interim support services as required (project management, analysis, secretariat). | \$0.4m - \$1m | s 9(2)(j) |
| 3 | Fact checking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a civil society and journalistic initiative to establish a fact checking network in New Zealand based on international best practice. Could undertake fact checking in relation to disinformation affecting the 2023 General Election and support the work of the NZ Electoral Commission. | \$0.2m - \$0.5m | Journalists, academia, and civil society organisations s 9(2)(j) |
| 4= | Education and community resilience initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support existing and new community-based initiatives to provide education and resilience building, media literacy etc. | \$0.2m - \$1m | s 9(2)(j) Māori and Iwi organisations |

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Estimated cost (scalable) | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could focus on communities where there is an identified need eg. Māori and Pasifika, school children, seniors etc. | | |
| 4= | Initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives to support the development of best practice disinformation monitoring and resilience building in New Zealand, including expertise, skills, and tools. Commission work to understand what international assistance and support in building a local capability might look like and how local nuances would be approached, ahead of any potential international procurement. | \$0.2m - \$1m | Explore domestic and international providers |
| N/A | Agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement processes, contract monitoring, stakeholder management. To prime the market and support an effective request for proposals, government could commission a review of the domestic environment to ascertain who is doing what and existing levels of capability. This may identify additional providers beyond those government is already aware of, and in turn make them aware of the funding opportunity. | \$0.4m (to be scaled relative to the overall package) | DPMC or DIA (DPMC is already undergoing significant cost-pressures and would be unable to meet these costs within existing baselines) |
| Total funding envelope: | | | \$1.8m - \$4.9m | |

Attachment B: Recommendations to be tabled for oral item at Cabinet, 19 December 2022, Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation

1. **Note** that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet forecast approximately \$14 million underspend for 2022/23 in the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response
2. **Note** that on 22 November 2021 Cabinet agreed that any baseline funding in the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation for 2022/23 not required to support the government's response to COVID-19 be returned to the centre [DEV-21-MIN-0235 and CAB-21-MIN-0487]
3. **Agree** to apply \$4.9 million of the underspend for 2022/23 from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation to initiatives to respond to disinformation within the Vote Prime Minister Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA
4. **Approve** the following fiscally neutral adjustment to provide for the decision in recommendation 3 above, with no impact on the operating balance or net debt

| Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet | \$m – increase/(decrease) | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 & Outyears |
| Minister for COVID-19 Response | | | | | |
| Departmental Output Expense: COVID-19 All of Government Response (funded by revenue Crown) | (4.900) | - | - | - | - |
| Prime Minister | | | | | |
| Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA Departmental Output Expense: Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General (funded by revenue Crown) | 4.900 | - | - | - | - |

5. **Agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2022/23 above be included in the 2022/23 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply
6. **Agree** that any funding committed in 2022/23 for the disinformation response activities be available to carry forward to 2023/24, to ensure funding remains available for this work
7. **Note** that the remaining unspent, or uncommitted, funding for 2022/23 in the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response will be returned to the centre.



Cabinet

Part 2 - Item 3

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Additional Item: Application of COVID-19 All of Government Response Appropriation to Respond to Disinformation

Portfolio Prime Minister

On 19 December 2022, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet forecast approximately \$14 million underspend for 2022/23 in the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response;
- 2 **noted** that on 22 November 2021 Cabinet agreed that any baseline funding in the COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation for 2022/23 not required to support the government's response to COVID-19 be returned to the centre [DEV-21-MIN-0235 and CAB-21-MIN-0487];
- 3 **agreed** to apply \$4.9 million of the underspend for 2022/23 from the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response appropriation to initiatives to respond to disinformation within the Vote Prime Minister Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA;
- 4 **approved** the following fiscally neutral adjustment to provide for the decision in paragraph 3 above, with no impact on the operating balance or net debt:

| Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet | \$m – increase/(decrease) | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 & Outyears |
| Minister for COVID-19 Response Departmental Output Expense: COVID-19 All of Government Response (funded by revenue Crown) | (4.900) | - | - | - | - |
| Prime Minister Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure: Advice and Support Services MCA Departmental Output Expense: Advice and Support to Government and the Governor-General (funded by revenue Crown) | 4.900 | - | - | - | - |

- 5 **agreed** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2022/23 above be included in the 2022/23 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply;

- 6 **agreed** that any funding committed in 2022/23 for the disinformation response activities be available to carry forward to 2023/24, to ensure funding remains available for this work;
- 7 **noted** that the remaining unspent or uncommitted funding for 2022/23 in the Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet departmental output expense appropriation COVID-19 All of Government Response will be returned to the centre.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Coversheet

Briefing: Interim initiatives to counter disinformation

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Date: | 4/11/2022 | Report No: | DPMC-2022/23-500 |
| | | Security Level: | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| | | Priority level: | Medium |

| | Action sought | Deadline |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence | agree to recs | 11/11/2022 |

| Name | Position | Telephone | 1 st Contact |
|---------------|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tony Lynch | Deputy Chief Executive National Security Group | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) |
| s 9(2)(g)(ii) | Principal Policy Advisor | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) |

| Departments/agencies consulted on Briefing |
|--|
| Department of Internal Affairs, The Treasury |

Minister's Office

Status:

Signed

Withdrawn

Comment for agency

Attachments: No

Briefing

Interim initiatives to counter disinformation

To: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence

| | | | |
|------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Date | 4/11/2022 | Security Level | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
|------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------------|

Purpose

1. This paper responds to your request for advice on initiatives to counter disinformation that could be funded ahead of the substantive work to establish the proposed non-government entity and corresponding Budget 2023 bid.

Executive Summary

2. There are risks in waiting to put in place better monitoring and insights of the disinformation landscape until a Budget 2023 bid and the substantive work to establish the proposed non-government entity. This paper responds to your request for advice on initiatives to respond to disinformation that could be funded in the interim and outlines a range of initiatives as follows (refer Table 1 on page 4 for further detail):
 - disinformation landscape monitoring and insights
 - support for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress the non-government entity
 - fact checking
 - education and community resilience building initiatives
 - initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability
 - agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives.
3. The initiatives are intended to help maintain and develop domestic capability outside government to understand and respond to the disinformation landscape. This capability could then form the basis of a more enduring and consolidated structure through the proposed non-government entity. The initiatives are intended to be mutually reinforcing of each other; reflect what the National Security Group (NSG) has learned from international responses to disinformation; and could be scaled to reflect the available funding envelope. The package proposed is approximately \$1.8m - \$4.9m. We seek your feedback on whether you wish to further pursue funding for the initiatives ahead of Budget 2023 and on the quantum of funding indicated.
4. Potential funding sources you raised at your National Security and Intelligence meeting on 19 October 2022 include the savings from the reduction in COVID-19 advertising funding approved to transfer from Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet to Vote Health as part of the transition of the DPMC COVID-19 public engagement and communications function to

Te Whatu Ora [DPMC-2022/23-416 refers]. There may be other similar options to this that could be explored.

5. Subject to your direction, NSG and the COVID-19 Group can advise on the most appropriate mechanism and Ministerial approvals required to give effect to any transfer or repurposing of funding from the COVID-19 appropriation and advise on an appropriate approach for the proposed initiatives, including appropriate agency roles to administer initiatives.
6. We will develop separate advice on work to establish the proposed non-government entity through a multi-stakeholder approach and a substantive Budget 2023 bid, incorporating the impact of any interim funding.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

1. **note** this paper responds to your request for advice on initiatives to counter disinformation that could be funded ahead of the substantive work to establish the proposed non-government entity and corresponding Budget 2023 bid
2. **agree** to further pursue funding for the following initiatives:
 - 2.1. disinformation landscape monitoring and insights **YES / NO**
 - 2.2. support for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress the proposed non-government entity **YES / NO**
 - 2.3. fact checking **YES / NO**
 - 2.4. education and community resilience building initiatives **YES / NO**
 - 2.5. initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability **YES / NO**
 - 2.6. agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives **YES / NO**
3. **note** the funding package proposed for the above initiatives is approximately \$1.8m - \$4.9m, and could be scaled to reflect the available funding envelope and type of initiatives you wish to progress
4. **indicate** if you have feedback on the size of the funding envelope to be sought **YES / NO**
5. **direct** officials to provide further advice to give effect to your decisions, including on the most appropriate mechanism and Ministerial approvals required to give effect to any transfer or repurposing of funding from DPMC's COVID-19 appropriation **YES / NO**

6. **direct** officials to advise on a funding and procurement approach for the proposed initiatives, including appropriate agency roles to administer the initiatives you wish to progress. YES / NO



Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group

04/11/2022

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence

...../...../.....

Background

7. s 6(a) you met with s 6(a) to discuss a proposal for an entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation affecting New Zealand [DPMC-2022/23-170 refers]. This paper responds to your request for advice on initiatives to respond to disinformation that could be funded in the interim ahead of the substantive work to establish the non-government entity and corresponding Budget 2023 bid.
8. You agreed to progress work to establish the entity though a multistakeholder approach and directed officials to prepare a Budget 2023 bid. Separate advice will be developed to progress these components.

COVID-19 disinformation has helped to spread broader disinformation narratives

9. COVID-19 disinformation has provided a vehicle for a range of other disinformation narratives that pose an ongoing challenge to New Zealand's national security and social cohesion. The rhetoric espoused, online and offline, has become increasingly extreme and anti-authority. Material normally associated with white identity extremist and anti-authority movements is now found in disinformation and conspiracy-theory groups previously focused on vaccines and vaccine mandates. Narratives have shifted to other causes as measures to mitigate COVID-19 have eased.
10. The National Security Survey undertaken as part of the National Security Long-term Insights Briefing found that while the majority of respondents consider the government and its agencies have the most responsibility to protect New Zealand against misinformation, a much smaller number believe these entities are fully resourced to do so.

Interim initiatives to counter disinformation

11. This section outlines initiatives that could be funded in the interim. These could be framed together as a potential 'Fund to strengthen resilience to disinformation' or undertaken individually.
12. Table 1 (below) lists the initiatives by approximate order of priority. The individual initiatives are intended to be mutually reinforcing of each other; for example, monitoring and insights helps to inform fact checking. These initiatives reflect what we have learned from international responses to disinformation, as canvassed in DPMC-2022/23-170.
13. Initiatives could be scaled to reflect the available funding envelope. Costs are high level estimates to help inform the overall funding envelope. Procurement would help to identify what is out there, who can deliver it, and how best to deliver value for money including by identifying where providers can leverage other funding sources against the government's contribution.

Table 1: Interim initiatives to counter disinformation ahead of substantive Budget 2023 bid

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Estimated cost (scalable) | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|----------|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Disinformation landscape monitoring and insights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of open-source data on narratives, growth trends, and emerging threats. General monitoring could identify leads for deeper dives on particular areas of concern eg. disinformation narratives affecting the 2023 General Election. Strengthened domestic capability could then support the proposed non-government disinformation entity. | \$0.4m - \$1m | Domestic – s 9(2)(j) [Redacted] International – s 9(2)(j) [Redacted] |
| 2 | Support for a multi-stakeholder approach to establish the proposed non-government entity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure a leader to convene a series of initial meetings of key stakeholders to further develop the entity proposal, ahead of the Budget 2023 bid. Reimburse key stakeholders for their time contributed to the work. Interim support services as required (project management, analysis, secretariat). | \$0.4m - \$1m | s 9(2)(j) [Redacted] |
| 3 | Fact checking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a civil society and journalistic initiative to establish a fact checking network in New | \$0.2m - \$0.5m | Journalists, academia, and civil society organisations s 9(2)(j) [Redacted] |

| Priority | Initiative | Purpose | Estimated cost (scalable) | Potential providers (procurement would identify others) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | | <p>Zealand based on international best practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could undertake fact checking in relation to disinformation affecting the 2023 General Election and support the work of the NZ Electoral Commission. | | s 9(2)(j) |
| 4= | Education and community resilience initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing and new community-based initiatives to provide education and resilience building, media literacy etc. • Could focus on communities where there is an identified need eg. Māori and Pasifika, school children, seniors etc. | \$0.2m - \$1m | s 9(2)(j) Māori and Iwi organisations |
| 4= | Initiatives to develop domestic expertise and capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to support the development of best practice disinformation monitoring and resilience building in New Zealand, including expertise, skills, and tools. • Commission work to understand what international assistance and support in building a local capability might look like and how local nuances would be approached, ahead of any potential international procurement. | \$0.2m - \$1m | Explore domestic and international providers |
| N/A | Agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement processes, contract monitoring, stakeholder management. • To prime the market and support an effective request for proposals, government could commission a review of the domestic environment to ascertain who is doing what and existing levels of capability. This may identify additional providers beyond those government is already aware of, and in turn make them aware of the funding opportunity. | \$0.4m (to be scaled relative to the overall package) | DPMC or DIA (DPMC is already undergoing significant cost-pressures and would be unable to meet these costs within existing baselines) |
| Total funding envelope: | | | \$1.8m - \$4.9m | |

These initiatives would help to maintain and develop the foundations for the proposed non-government entity

14. These initiatives are intended to help maintain and develop domestic capability outside government to understand and respond to the disinformation landscape. This domestic capability could then form the basis of a more enduring and consolidated structure through the non-government entity proposal.
15. If these initiatives were funded, several of the functions envisaged for the proposed entity may further develop in a more organic and dispersed way. While we still see merit in a consolidated capability given New Zealand's small scale and limited starting position, there are potential benefits in also supporting a more dispersed network. For example, more diversity and different areas of focus, more scope for peer review and cross-pollination, and less of a single large target for efforts to undermine the function.
16. In terms of the monitoring and insights initiative, our preference would be to utilise domestic providers. While international services are available, they are unlikely to be as effective in understanding the New Zealand context.¹ However, international services may still be valuable for sharing best practice, skills and expertise with domestic providers. Open-source intelligence practitioners within government agencies may also be able to offer assistance.

DIA Digital Safety Group's work with the University of Auckland's 'Hate and Extremism Insights Aotearoa' team

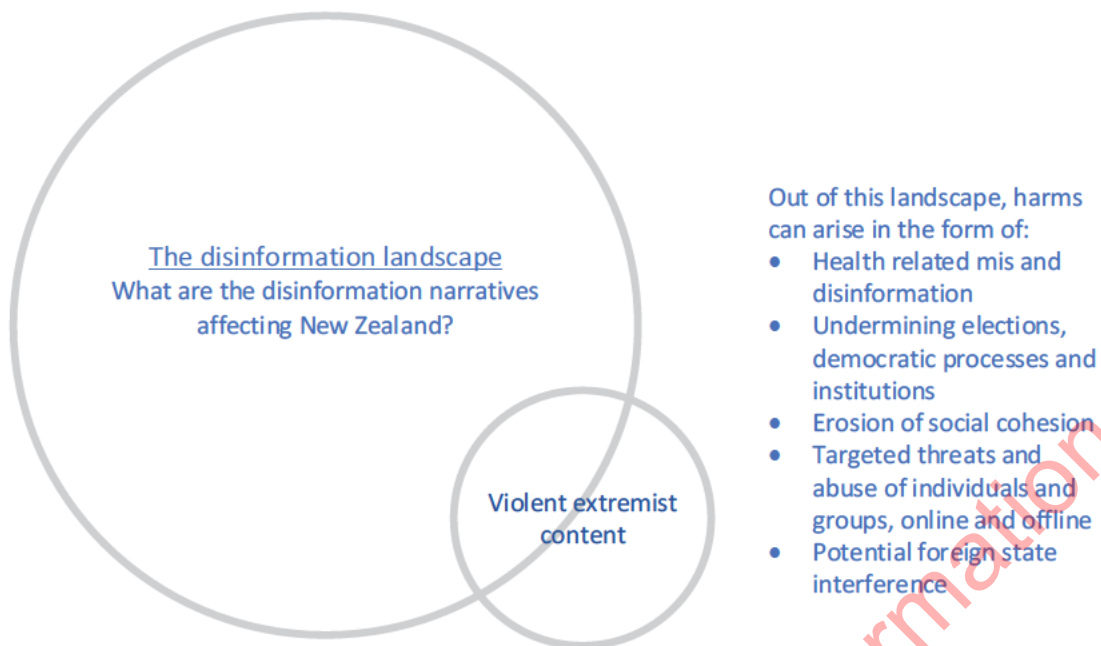
17. Further to our previous advice on key stakeholders [DPMC-2022/23-170], DIA have identified § 9(2)(g)(i) in the University of Auckland's 'Hate and Extremism Insight Aotearoa' (HEIA) team, which is being supported by DIA's Digital Safety Group. HEIA conducts data-led research to measure and analyse harmful online rhetoric within New Zealand. Led by Dr. Chris Wilson,² HEIA is a direct response to The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain that recommended the need to grow local knowledge and capabilities to better understand the domestic violent extremist landscape.
18. DIA previously contracted with the UK-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue's (ISD) for reporting during the stand-up of the Digital Violent Extremism program. The contract with ISD has come to an end and from early 2023 DIA's Digital Safety team will be delivering insights from a HEIA data-fed dashboard.
19. While HEIA focuses on hate and extremism, there is significant ideological convergence with the broader disinformation landscape. Conspiracy theories are already being captured within the dataset because of the interplay with local extremist ecosystems. § 9(2)(g)(i)

The following diagram illustrates the overlap between the broad disinformation landscape and its violent extremist sub-component:

¹ Local knowledge is critical to parse disinformation narratives accurately, as content is often locally specific, intentionally ambiguous or ironic (eg. to create plausible deniability as to intent) and has distinct vocabulary and terminology.

² Dr. Wilson is regarded both domestically and internationally as an expert on political violence, and has appeared at both He Whenua Taurikura Hui as an expert panel speaker.

Diagram 1: The disinformation landscape



Further work on funding options is required

20. On 4 July 2022 Cabinet agreed to an indicative plan for the DPMC COVID-19 functions to decentralise to health agencies this financial year [SWC-22-MIN-0228 confirmed by Cabinet]. Ministers with Powers to Act have agreed that the strategic communications, coordination and communications to address COVID-19 disinformation will transfer to Manatū Hauora by the end of November [DPMC-2022/23-88 refers]. No transfer of funding was proposed as part of the transition of this function (to be clear, this function does not include any of the initiatives proposed in this briefing). Ministers approved fiscally neutral transfers from Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet to Vote Health for 2022/23 of \$1.852m for Manatū Hauora and \$5.761 million for Te Whatu Ora to enable those agencies to continue existing service contracts and to deliver the other functions they each received.
21. One potential source to fund the interim initiatives proposed in this paper could include repurposing projected left-over funding that is not required to support the transition of the DPMC COVID-19 function to health agencies. One example is the savings from the reduction in COVID-19 advertising funding approved to transfer from Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet to Vote Health as part of the transition of the DPMC COVID-19 public engagement and communications function to Te Whatu Ora [DPMC-2022/23-416 refers]. There may be other similar options that could also be explored.
22. DPMC COVID-19 funding was sourced from the CRRF and that there was an expectation that any underspend would be returned to the Crown. DPMC will work with Treasury to ensure that any repurposing of funding would be done in an appropriate way and will provide you with further advice on this.
23. Further advice would also be developed on appropriate processes to allocate funding. Some initiatives may suit a more straightforward community grant funding round, and others, such as support for a multi-stakeholder approach, may require a more bespoke process.

Further advice on agency roles to administer initiatives will be developed

24. The package proposed includes funding for agency overheads to procure and implement initiatives, to be scaled relative to type of initiatives you wish to progress.
25. NSG does not currently have the capacity and capability to support multiple procurement processes of this nature, including ongoing management of them. DPMC is undergoing significant cost-pressures and would be unable to meet these costs within existing baselines.
26. Another option would be for DIA to deliver the initiatives, given the aforementioned work with the University of Auckland. DIA are also administrating grant funding under the Strategic Framework on preventing and countering violent extremism (in development), which is supported by \$3.2m of funding over a 3-year period.
27. We will advise on appropriate agency roles for the initiatives you wish to progress in the forward advice.

Next steps

28. Subject to your direction, we will explore the funding options available and report back to you on the most appropriate mechanisms and approvals required. We will also advise on appropriate funding and procurement approaches for the proposed initiatives. Separate advice will be developed on work to establish the entity through a multi-stakeholder approach and a substantive Budget 2023 bid, incorporating the impact of any interim funding.



Coversheet

Briefing: Progressing a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand

| | | | |
|-------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Date: | 14/10/2022 | Report No: | DPMC-2022/23-170 |
| | | Security Level: | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| | | Priority level: | Medium |

| | Action sought | Deadline |
|--|--|------------|
| Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Minister for National Security and Intelligence | agree to your preferred options discuss at [redacted] s 6(a) | 19/10/2022 |

| Name | Position | Telephone | 1 st Contact |
|---------------|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tony Lynch | Deputy Chief Executive National Security Group | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) |
| s 9(2)(g)(ii) | Principal Policy Advisor | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) |

Departments/agencies consulted on Briefing

NSG has undertaken targeted consultation with key contacts in the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and NZ Police. The proposal has been tested in confidence with a range of key non-government stakeholders across academia, media, and civil society organisations, as well as with the Classification Office and New Zealand Electoral Commission.

Minister's Office

Status:

Signed

Withdrawn

Comment for agency

Attachments: Yes

Briefing

Progressing a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand

To: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Minister for National Security and Intelligence

| | | | |
|------|------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Date | 14/10/2022 | Security Level | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
|------|------------|----------------|------------------------------------|

Purpose

- This paper responds to your request for further advice on progressing a proposal for a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand. This is on the agenda for your s 6(a) meeting s 6(a), where we would like to discuss:
 - your comfort with the National Security Group (NSG) undertaking further discussions to take the work forward
 - your preferences for a multi-stakeholder approach to progress work on the entity, including the role of government in this
 - whether you want to progress a Budget 2023 bid to seek funding for this work, and timing implications for this.

Executive Summary

We have talked to key stakeholders and developed further advice for your consideration

- You have asked for further advice about how to set up a non-government entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation affecting New Zealand. To inform this advice, we have tested the proposal with a range of key non-government stakeholders across civil society, academia, and the media¹, and looked at approaches in other like-minded countries.
- Stakeholders support the proposal and agree there is a compelling need for this function in New Zealand. They agreed with the proposed operational independence from government and the focus on building domestic capability and expertise. There were different views about what should be done by the entity itself as opposed to funding being provided for these functions to be undertaken by other actors, such as for fact-checking and debunking, and the delivery of education and resilience activities. Attachment A lists the potential functions for the entity we tested with stakeholders.

¹ Including: Internet NZ; NetSafe; the Media Freedom Committee; the Disinformation Project; Brainbox Ltd; David Shanks (former Chief Censor); Jordan Carter (former Internet NZ CEO); and Dr Mona Krewel (Director of the Internet, Social Media, and Politics Research Lab, Victoria University of Wellington). We also tested the proposal with the Classification Office and NZ Electoral Commission, as potential users of the proposed entity's insights.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Briefing: Progressing a proposal for a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand | DPMC-2022/23-170 |
|---|------------------|

4. Many stakeholders were keen to be involved and supported the idea of setting up some form of multi-stakeholder group to either guide the work, or potentially to lead it more directly. Stakeholders were clear they see a role for government to fund the multi-stakeholder approach to establish the entity, and fund the entity's ongoing operating costs.
5. Stakeholders preferred the eventual form of the entity to be either hosted within a university or to establish a new standalone organisation. They indicated a university may offer a faster and more cost-effective option, the benefit of access to an established 'non-partisan' brand, researchers, and leveraging existing facilities and corporate overheads. Alternately, the establishment of a standalone entity presents a unique opportunity to set up a new fit for purpose structure, and identity, but would likely be less timely and more costly.

If you wish to progress this work, we recommend setting up a multi-stakeholder group to either inform or lead the work

6. Key stakeholders would be drawn from relevant groups and individuals across civil society, academia, and the media (refer attachment B). We envisage a tight core group of approximately 5-10 people, that is small enough to build trust between members and agile enough to make progress.
7. There are options for whether the multi-stakeholder group is either:
 - empowered to **lead the work** itself and make decisions, with government limited to playing a convening and funding role
 - or tasked with **informing the work**, with government or another body such as a university or third-party provider leading the work and making decisions.
8. Attachment C compares the advantages and disadvantages of these two options. Irrespective of the approach taken, government is likely to need to be more involved at the start to get the process underway, and to gradually step aside as the work progresses towards the establishment and implementation of an operationally independent, non-government entity.
9. There were different views among stakeholders about the role government should perform in a multi-stakeholder approach to establish the entity. Some supported government ongoing influence in the work. Others thought government should resource the work but not drive the proposal so as to enhance the independence of the entity and better mitigate concerns relating to government influence over public discourse and freedom of expression, privacy issues, and anxiety around state surveillance and control.

A Budget 2023 bid is needed, but there are timing implications to consider

10. If you wish to proceed with the entity proposal, government funding would need to be sought through a Budget 2023 bid. If progress and momentum is needed sooner, an alternate source of interim funding is required. Even with interim funding, it is unclear if the entity could be established ahead of the 2023 General Election, which may be a significant catalyst for further proliferation of mis- and disinformation. You may wish to revisit other options to strengthen disinformation monitoring capability in the interim. Temporary mechanisms established to monitor COVID-19 related disinformation as part of the pandemic response are in the process of winding down, further reducing visibility.

NSG can continue to perform the government's role in this work, but you may wish to consider other options

11. NSG can take forward government's role in the entity proposal in the near term, but beyond this we recommend you consider setting up a separate project within DPMC but outside NSG reporting to you as PM (as per the Christchurch Call Unit). Alternately, the work could be led

from Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), reporting either to you as PM or to the Minister of Internal Affairs given connections to the Content Regulatory Review and DIA's Digital Safety team.

- 12. A key rationale for a multi-stakeholder approach is to provide assurance around the possible negative public perceptions of the proposed entity, including mitigating the risk the entity is mischaracterised as an instrument of state control or surveillance. The entity will need to build public trust, transparency and social license around its' purpose. Distancing the work from the National Security and Intelligence portfolio may help achieve both these things.

Cross-party political support would help the entity to endure political cycles

- 13. To ensure the entity can endure across political cycles and reduce the risk this proposal becomes framed as a partisan initiative, we recommend attempting to get cross-party support. Various stakeholders were concerned about this risk too. You may wish to consider directly approaching other party leaders yourself to discuss this and find ways to secure support.

Recommendations


We recommend you:

- 1. **note** that on s 6(a) you met with s 6(a) to discuss a proposal for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand [DPMC-2021/22-2526 refers]
- 2. **note** that you sought further advice as to how the work to establish the entity could involve relevant groups and individuals independent from government, rather than being led directly by government
- 3. **note** the proposal and advice in this paper has been informed by initial engagement with a range of stakeholders outside government and early international engagement
- 4. **agree** to progress work to establish a non-government entity to address disinformation through a multi-stakeholder approach **YES / NO**
- 5. **indicate** your preference as to whether the multi-stakeholder group should be
 - EITHER**
 - 5.1. empowered to **lead** the work itself, with government limited to playing a convening and funding role **YES / NO**
 - OR**
 - 5.2. tasked with **informing** the work, with government or another body such as a university or third-party provider leading the work **YES / NO**
- 6. **discuss** your preferred approach for how involved government should be in the multi-stakeholder approach and when it needs to step aside to allow others to take the work forward **YES / NO**

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|---|------------------|

- 7. **discuss** if you have a preference for the eventual form of the entity, for example establishing a new standalone entity or hosting it within a university, and whether you want this preference to inform the multi-stakeholder approach at the outset YES / NO
- 8. **direct** officials to prepare a Budget 2023 bid for initiatives to respond to disinformation, including for a 'non-government entity to counter and build resilience to disinformation in New Zealand' YES / NO
- 9. **indicate** whether you would like further advice on options other than NSG to take forward government's role in this work, such as a separate project within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet reporting to you as Prime Minister or that this work be undertaken by the Department of Internal Affairs, reporting either to you as Prime Minister or to the Minister of Internal Affairs. YES / NO
- 10. **forward** this advice and DPMC-2021/22-2526 to the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister for the Digital Economy and Communications, and the Minister for Broadcasting and Media for their information. YES / NO

s 9(2)(a)



Tony Lynch
 p.p. s 9(2)(g)(ii)
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group

14 / 10 / 2022

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Minister for National Security and
Intelligence

...../...../.....

Background

14. s 6(a) , you met with s 6(a) to discuss a proposal for an entity to monitor and produce insights about disinformation affecting New Zealand [DPMC-2021/22-2526 refers]. We proposed the entity would operate independently from government but be funded by government to ensure it is well-resourced, stable, and able to be stood up efficiently, with other funding sources explored later if appropriate.
15. You have asked for further advice about how to set up the non-government entity. From the discussion we had with you s 6(a) we understand you sought further advice to consider how the entity proposal could be driven and led by relevant groups and individuals independent from government, rather than directly by government.
16. There is a high level of concern among the public about the impact of disinformation. The National Security Survey undertaken as part of the National Security Long-term Insights Briefing found that, of the threats New Zealanders are most worried about, they were particularly concerned about mis- and disinformation (84%). Recent research undertaken by DPMC through Kantar found 79% of those surveyed felt that the spread of false and misleading information was a risk to democracy in New Zealand.²
17. Monitoring and insights are needed to ensure actions to respond to disinformation by government and others are proportionate, targeted, and well-evidenced. They would inform work by the media, academia and the public to better understand disinformation and build resilience to its harms. Internationally and domestically, significant work is needed to analyse the transition chains and networks for disinformation across different platforms, who is being targeted, who the threat actors are, and the role of algorithmic amplification and monetisation.
18. The media and independent researchers have been instrumental in informing the public about the aspirations of disinformation groups in the recent local government elections, as well as raising awareness more generally through reporting such as Stuff's recent *Fire and Fury* documentary. The 2023 General Election may be a significant catalyst for further proliferation of mis- and disinformation.

We have talked to key stakeholders and developed further advice for your consideration

19. To inform this briefing, we have tested the proposal with a range of key non-government stakeholders across civil society, academia, and the media and looked at approaches in other like-minded countries.
20. Attachment E provides a summary of initial international engagement, informed by reporting from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades's overseas postings. NSG has had early bilateral engagements with the EU, and directly with the EU-funded European Digital Media Observatory hub in Ireland to help inform this work. Further international engagement is needed if this work proceeds, including with 'best practice' disinformation monitoring entities

² The National Security Survey period covered 11 February – 2 March 2022, which overlapped with the protest action at Parliament. The timing of the survey is likely to have impacted results. The Kantar Survey was conducted August to September 2022 by Kantar. Survey size: n2,500.

such as the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab and Stanford University's Internet Observatory.

- 21. Many like-minded countries have experienced the impacts of disinformation for longer than New Zealand has and have progressed a range of initiatives to build domestic capability to monitor disinformation, counter harmful impacts and develop societal resilience. New Zealand establishing a non-government entity to monitor disinformation would be a step in this direction reflecting our domestic context and would complement the international standing we have via the Christchurch Call. Given our reputation as a smart and effective player in the digital domain, New Zealand's approach is likely to be of interest to other countries.

Stakeholders have provided useful feedback

- 22. Stakeholders support the proposal and agree there is a compelling need for this function in New Zealand. They supported the proposed operational independence from government, and the focus on building domestic capability and expertise.
- 23. There was broad agreement that all the functions we listed in DPMC-2021/22-2526 for the entity to undertake need to occur somewhere. However, there were different views about what should be done by the entity itself as opposed to funding being provided for these functions to other actors, such as for fact-checking and debunking, and the delivery of education and resilience activities. Attachment A lists all the potential functions tested with stakeholders.
- 24. Stakeholders were clear they see a role for government to fund a multi-stakeholder process to establish the entity and to fund the entity's ongoing operating costs. Stakeholders were keen to be involved in the work and supported the idea of setting up some form of multi-stakeholder group to guide and inform, and potentially lead, the work. There were different views of whether and how government should be involved in this multi-stakeholder group.
- 25. Stakeholders thought the entity being hosted by a university or establishing a new standalone entity were the preferred options for its eventual form. A university may offer a faster and more cost-effective option, the benefit of access to an established 'non-partisan' brand, access to resource and researchers, and leveraging existing facilities and corporate overheads.
- 26. s 9(2)(j) [redacted] Alternately, the establishment of a new standalone entity presents an opportunity to set up a fit for purpose structure and identity, but would be less timely and more costly. Attachment D provides a high level assessment of different forms for the proposed entity.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

s 9(2)(j) [redacted]

If you wish to progress this work, we recommend setting up a multi-stakeholder group to either guide or lead the work

27. We envisage several key phases to establish the entity:
- Project set up phase
 - Informal engagement with key stakeholders (underway)
 - Secure government funding for the work
 - Convene a multi-stakeholder group to either guide or lead the work
 - Develop terms of reference, specify key requirements for the project, set a work plan and timeframes.
 - Establishment phase
 - Multi-stakeholder group guides or leads the detailed design of the entity
 - Develop the funding arrangement between government and the entity.
 - Implementation phase
 - Draw down operating funding
 - Hire an enduring governance and oversight board for the entity
 - Secure premises, hire key staff, commence operations.
28. The premise behind a multi-stakeholder approach to governance for the work would be to bring different stakeholders together to participate in discussion, decision making, and implementation of the response to the jointly perceived problems posed by disinformation. If multiple stakeholders can contribute their expertise towards decisions, the eventual entity would have greater legitimacy and be more effectively implemented than a traditional state-developed response.
29. The multi-stakeholder group would draw from key relevant groups and individuals across civil society, academia, and the media. Stakeholders would include those with expertise in understanding and responding to disinformation and influence operations, digital resilience and internet governance, relevant legal and privacy issues, and what it takes to stand up a successful non-government entity.
30. We envisage a tight core group of approximately 5-10 people, that is small enough to build trust between members and agile enough to make progress. Ultimately, the size will depend on getting the right mix of skills and experience around the table. Attachment B provides an initial list of stakeholders we would recommend exploring further. We would welcome your suggestions for stakeholders to consider based on your engagements in this area.
31. Māori representation in the group will be important. Our engagements with Iwi Chairs representatives have highlighted the multi-faceted impacts on Māori of disinformation during the pandemic. This includes as targets, producers, and subscribers of disinformation narratives and conspiratorial thinking, within the context of experiences of colonisation and intergenerational mistrust of state authority.

There are options for the role the multi-stakeholder group performs and the role of government

32. There are many variations of greater or lesser degrees of non-government or government leadership that could be explored within different multi-stakeholder approaches. Regardless of the eventual model chosen, an approach is needed that creates trust, cooperation, and understanding between diverse stakeholders unified by shared values and goals.
33. There are options for whether the multi-stakeholder group is either:
- empowered to **lead the work** itself, with government limited to playing a convening and funding role
 - or tasked with **informing the work**, with government or another body such as a university or third-party provider leading the work and making key decisions.
34. Attachment C provides a high-level comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of these options. Irrespective of the approach taken, government is likely to need to be more involved at the start to get the process underway, and to gradually step aside as the work progresses towards the establishment and implementation phases of an operationally independent, non-government entity. This was broadly the approach to establishing He Whenua Taurikura, the National Centre of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.⁴
35. Key considerations to inform the preferred model are:
- to ensure the work is informed by and able to harness the expertise and support of relevant groups and individuals across civil society, academia, and the media
 - the approach taken must enhance the actual and perceived independence of the entity and provide assurance to public concerns relating to government influence over public discourse and freedom of expression, privacy issues, and anxiety around state surveillance and control.
 - to deliver value for money, financial accountability, and in a timely manner.
36. A more 'hands off' approach from government would mean the Executive branch accepting non-government stakeholders having a greater degree of control, including over government funding. This would require a high degree of trust on both sides. A more 'hands off' approach also comes with a greater risk that the eventual solution and its outputs do not end up meeting the needs of government agencies (in terms of insights that are actionable and able to be utilised to protect government portfolio interests) and may make it more difficult to secure funding through Budget 2023. If the multi-stakeholder group is tasked with leading the work, they would need to be supported by a project team with analytical, secretariat and project management resource.
37. Once funding is available, government could procure a provider to lead the multi-stakeholder approach rather than government itself leading the work. A robust procurement process would be needed to identify viable providers. Based on initial soundings, an example of a provider

⁴ There is also a high-level similarity to the establishment of Netsafe, which was founded in 1998 as the Internet Safety Group. 'After noticing the growing influence of technology in their respective areas, the New Zealand Police, Ministry of Education and several not for profits teamed up with telecommunication organisations and IT industry partners to create an independent body focused on online safety.' <https://netsafe.org.nz/a-look-back-on-20-years/>

operating in this space would be s 9(2)(j) based on their multi-stakeholder experience in international and domestic tech forums.⁵ Various stakeholders involved in a multi-stakeholder approach may seek employment within the eventual entity, so there may be a need to manage any potential or perceived conflicts of interest. A provider such as s 9(2)(j) may be better placed to be impartial in this respect. Another option to explore would be selecting a university to take on this role.

A Budget 2023 bid is needed, but there are timing implications to consider

- 38. We recommend you direct officials to develop a bid for Budget 2023 to secure government funding for the multi-stakeholder approach to establish the entity and to fund the entity's ongoing operating costs.
- 39. This does not foreclose the possibility of other funding sources being leveraged if they eventuate and are appropriate, including funding from philanthropic sources, private sector bodies such as the tech platforms, the academic sector, or a levy on users utilising the insights produced by the entity. However, all of these are likely to pose risks and careful consideration would be needed to ensure it does not compromise the perceived independence of the entity.
- 40. Government's main influence over the entity once it is established is likely to be the terms of the funding arrangement for ongoing operating costs and the mechanism through which this is set up. We note your interest in setting up a trust or other arm's length mechanism for this. This will be considered in forward advice to better understand how it might work.

Estimated costs

- 41. Based on our initial engagements, we estimate annual operating costs for the entity to be approximately \$3m - \$5m per annum, with one-off establishment costs of approximately \$1m - \$2m
- 42. Our operating cost estimates are based on non-government organisations of a similar size and our initial discussions with stakeholders.⁶ Most of the funding is likely to be for staff costs. Higher funding would better enable the entity to attract talent in a highly competitive field (data analysis), including potentially from overseas, and to analyse more of the information environment as opposed to needing to triage restrictively because of inadequate staffing. A government commitment to funding the entity's annual operating costs for at least its first 3-4 years of operation is likely to be needed to provide certainty at the outset.
- 43. Establishment costs would cover compensating stakeholders for their time and funding analytical, project, and secretariat support costs. Establishment costs would also be used to

s 9(2)(j)

⁶ For comparison, in 2020/21, the Classification Office operated with revenue of \$3.65m in 2021, Netsafe with \$4.06m, and the Human Rights Commission with \$13.52m. He Whenua Taurikura, the National Centre of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, will receive \$1.325 million for the year beginning 1 July 2022 and \$2.15m for each subsequent year. s 6(b)(ii)

fund capability building, including through the procurement of specialist expertise both domestically and internationally.

Other supporting initiatives could be considered in the budget bid

44. We recommend the budget bid also consider funding for services in the interim period while work on the entity is progressed, including:
- monitoring the disinformation landscape in New Zealand to inform policy advice and decision-making;
 - research and advice to inform appropriate frameworks for monitoring and responding to disinformation in New Zealand, and;⁷
 - funding to support a coordinating function within government to ensure alignment across agencies and a systemic approach to responding to disinformation, to eventually be supported by insights and advice from the non-government entity.
45. You also expressed interest in ways to support and fund existing community initiatives to counter disinformation and build societal resilience to its harms. There is likely to be some overlap with initiatives that will be grant funded under the Strategic Framework on preventing and countering violent extremism (in development), which is supported by \$3.2m of funding over a 3-year period. We will explore this further in our forward advice, including the potential for more funding focused on community resilience approaches to disinformation.

Timing implications

46. We understand letters inviting new spending initiatives for Budget 2023 will be sent to portfolio Ministers in late October 2022 and new spending initiatives are due for submission in mid-December 2022.
47. Not having funding available until Budget 2023 means it is likely to be difficult to make progress until the second quarter of 2023. In mid-2023 the House is expected to rise for the pre-General Election period. Realistically, this may make it difficult to achieve material progress to stand up the entity until 2024, depending on the appetite for work to progress while the election is underway.
48. If progress and momentum is desirable sooner, an alternate source of additional interim funding is needed. Even with interim funding, it is unclear if a monitoring function could be established ahead of the 2023 General Election. You may wish to revisit other options to strengthen disinformation monitoring capability in the interim, and further advice can be provided on request. Temporary mechanisms established to monitor COVID-19 related disinformation as part of the pandemic response are in the process of winding down, reducing visibility.

⁷ For example, we have received a request from Brainbox to co-fund research and analysis on 'Appropriate approaches to regulating disinformation in Aotearoa New Zealand', which could usefully inform DIA's Content Regulatory Review. The research proposal intends to assess appropriate regulatory interventions against disinformation and misinformation, including accountability and governance safeguards, in light of the principles of human rights frameworks - like justifiability, proportionality, necessity, legality and effectiveness.

fund capability building, including through the procurement of specialist expertise both domestically and internationally.

Other supporting initiatives could be considered in the budget bid

44. We recommend the budget bid also consider funding for services in the interim period while work on the entity is progressed, including:
- monitoring the disinformation landscape in New Zealand to inform policy advice and decision-making;
 - research and advice to inform appropriate frameworks for monitoring and responding to disinformation in New Zealand, and;⁷
 - funding to support a coordinating function within government to ensure alignment across agencies and a systemic approach to responding to disinformation, to eventually be supported by insights and advice from the non-government entity.
45. You also expressed interest in ways to support and fund existing community initiatives to counter disinformation and build societal resilience to its harms. There is likely to be some overlap with initiatives that will be grant funded under the Strategic Framework on preventing and countering violent extremism (in development), which is supported by \$3.2m of funding over a 3-year period. We will explore this further in our forward advice, including the potential for more funding focused on community resilience approaches to disinformation.

Timing implications

46. We understand letters inviting new spending initiatives for Budget 2023 will be sent to portfolio Ministers in late October 2022 and new spending initiatives are due for submission in mid-December 2022.
47. Not having funding available until Budget 2023 means it is likely to be difficult to make progress until the second quarter of 2023. In mid-2023 the House is expected to rise for the pre-General Election period. Realistically, this may make it difficult to achieve material progress to stand up the entity until 2024, depending on the appetite for work to progress while the election is underway.
48. If progress and momentum is desirable sooner, an alternate source of additional interim funding is needed. Even with interim funding, it is unclear if a monitoring function could be established ahead of the 2023 General Election. You may wish to revisit other options to strengthen disinformation monitoring capability in the interim, and further advice can be provided on request. Temporary mechanisms established to monitor COVID-19 related disinformation as part of the pandemic response are in the process of winding down, reducing visibility.

_____ s 9(2)(ba)(i)

NSG can continue to perform government's role in this work, but you may wish to consider other options

49. NSG can take forward government's role in this work in the near term, but beyond this we recommend you consider setting up a separate project within DPMC but outside NSG reporting to you as PM (as per the Christchurch Call Unit). Alternately, the work could be led from DIA, reporting either to you as PM or to the Minister of Internal Affairs given connections to the Content Regulatory Review and DIA's Digital Safety team
50. A key rationale for a multi-stakeholder approach is to provide assurance around the possible negative public perceptions of the proposed entity, including mitigating the risk the entity is mischaracterised as an instrument of state control or surveillance. The entity will need to build public trust, transparency and social license around its' purpose. Distancing the work from the National Security and Intelligence portfolio may help achieve both these things.

NSG faces resourcing constraints, depending on the pace and scope of work required

51. Unrelated to these risks around public perceptions, there is a risk that NSG may struggle to progress the work needed at pace absent additional resource or reprioritisation of other work. NSG is currently progressing high priority work programmes in a number of different areas; for example: counter-terrorism, foreign interference, critical infrastructure resilience, machinery of government, and support to (and subsequent response to) the review of the Intelligence and Security Act 2017. Depending on the pace and scale of further work required on disinformation, there is likely to be a need to consider the balance of work across other priority areas.
52. For context, NSG currently has one permanent FTE assigned to work on disinformation, and one fixed term FTE funded to the end of 2022 focused on disinformation related to the COVID-19 response.

Other workstreams are needed to support a comprehensive approach

53. In addition to progressing work on the proposed non-government entity, there is also a need to progress the following broad workstreams, which have been challenging to advance and coordinate under current resource constraints:
 - international cooperation, alongside the Christchurch Call, to inform and align New Zealand's response with that of like-minded international partners
 - leadership and coordination of a better cross-government tactical response to disinformation, including initiatives to align strategic communications responses and stakeholder engagement, and strengthen resilience to its harms through education and enhancing social cohesion
 - consideration of other policy, regulatory and legislative tools to respond to disinformation, alongside DIA's Content Regulatory Review.

Cross-party political support would help the entity to endure political cycles

- 54. To ensure the entity can endure across political cycles and reduce the risk this proposal becomes framed as a partisan initiative, we recommend attempting to get cross-party support. Various stakeholders were concerned about this risk too.
- 55. You may wish to consider directly approaching other party leaders yourself to discuss the proposal and find ways to secure support. Government's main influence over the entity is likely to be the terms of the funding arrangement and the mechanism through which this is set up. Cross-party input and endorsement into this arrangement may help to allay concerns among other parties.
- 56. We note engagements have occurred on the harms posed by disinformation through the Intelligence and Security Committee and the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee. In our view, these forums have been useful, but something further and timelier is likely needed with all parties in Parliament if this proposal is to proceed.

Next steps

- 57. Your feedback and decisions are sought on the advice in this paper. This item is on the agenda for discussion at your s 6(a) with s 6(a)

| Attachments: | Title | Security classification |
|---------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Attachment A: | Functions the entity could undertake | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment B: | Individuals and groups to involve in a multi-stakeholder approach | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment C | Multi-stakeholder group options, leading or informing the work | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment D: | Assessment of different forms for the proposed entity | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment E: | International responses to disinformation | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |
| Attachment F: | Diagram of relationships between different organisations to the proposed entity under a potential future state | RESTRICTED UNCLASSIFIED |

**Attachment E is out of scope.*

Attachment A: Functions the entity could undertake

58. In DPMC-2021/22-2526 we proposed that the entity would carry out its purpose by undertaking some combination of the following functions. Stakeholders confirmed all these functions are important and need to occur, but had different views about what should be done by the entity itself as opposed to government support provided for others to undertake these functions informed by the entity's core monitoring and insight functions:
- a) **Monitoring** – Undertake social media analysis and monitoring of disinformation narratives affecting New Zealand.
 - b) **Insights** – Produce empirical insights on New Zealand's disinformation landscape and publish these through assessment reports available to the public, journalists, and government. Undertake research and support academic research activities in universities.
 - c) **Fact checking** – Undertake fact checking and debunking of key disinformation narratives circulating in New Zealand's online environments, including supporting other organisations to do this (eg. the NZ Electoral Commission with respect to disinformation narratives undermining election integrity).
 - d) **Outreach** – The entity would undertake outreach activities to network, coordinate, advocate, build expertise, and share its analysis and insights with a range of stakeholders, including as follows:
 - domestically, with a range of both government and non-governmental organisations, including providing support to help limit the spread and harms of disinformation
 - internationally, with institutions with similar functions and values, including to share and develop expertise.
 - e) **Education** – Publish information to raise awareness. Carry out training activities and provide best practice guidance on topics related to disinformation, open to all relevant stakeholders, including fact-checking actors, government, community groups, researchers, and journalists.
 - f) **Advice** – Make policy recommendations to government and agencies based on its analysis and research to ensure policy responses and other actions are grounded in evidence. This may include providing specific investigations or advisory services in response to commissions.

Attachment B: Individuals and groups to involve in a multi-stakeholder approach

59. At this stage, we envisage further exploring the involvement of the following groups and individuals, noting not all will necessarily be available:

s 9(2)(j)



- A legal expert, with experience of NZ human rights legislation, privacy issues and internet regulation, and/or a representative of the judiciary
- Media representative(s), such as a seasoned journalist or head of a major newsroom
- Government representative(s) – although there are options for whether and how government is involved.

60. While we envisage a tight core grouping of approximately 5-10 members, this size would make it challenging to incorporate all perspectives impacted by the problems posed to society by disinformation. To ensure broad input to their work, we see a need to partner and consult with a range of other groups. For example:

- Iwi Chairs representatives;⁹
- representatives of specific communities at risk of harm from disinformation (and/or at risk of harm from surveillance, censorship, or moderation of the information environment);
- other civil society organisations that might serve as important external critics of the work
s 9(2)(g)(i) ;
- various independent Crown entities and self-regulatory agencies with experience in balancing freedom of expression against other rights s 9(2)(g)(i)

⁸ Note, DPMC-2021/22-2526 included an annex with Brainbox's report *Appropriate frameworks for social media analysis in New Zealand*. DPMC's COVID-19 Group commissioned this work to better understand the challenges and opportunities for monitoring disinformation in New Zealand.

⁹ DPMC has engaged with an Iwi Chairs Forum working group on the challenges of responding to disinformation.

Attachment C: Multi-stakeholder group options

61. The following table sets out the advantages and disadvantages of whether the multi-stakeholder group is either:

- empowered to **lead the work** itself, with government limited to playing a convening and funding role (option 1)
- or tasked with **informing the work**, with government or another body such as a university or third-party provider leading the work and making key decisions (option 2).

| | Option 1: Multi-stakeholder group empowered to lead the work | Option 2: Multi-stakeholder group tasked with informing the work |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Advantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May better utilise the expertise of multiple stakeholders and generate greater buy in than option 2 • Better mitigates concerns government perceived to influence public discourse and freedom of expression • May increase perceived political neutrality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government would have greater control over its investment in the entity • Likely to be faster to establish the entity, if this work is prioritised |
| Disadvantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk that stakeholders lack the capability and capacity to drive this work • Risk that competing agendas among different stakeholders fails to reach consensus • Government would have reduced control over its investment in the entity, which may make it more difficult to achieve a Budget 2023 bid • May be slower to establish the entity • Risk stakeholders are not perceived as sufficiently 'politically neutral' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not utilise the expertise of civil society actors and reduced buy compared to option 1 • Potential for increased risk the entity is perceived as an instrument of state surveillance and control • Reduced perceived political neutrality |
| Conclusion / trade-off | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferable if greater buy-in and political neutrality is prioritised, despite risks this approach may be slower and challenging to fund in the near term. • There is a question around the role government performs in this group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferable if speed and greater government control over investment is prioritised, despite risks over perceptions of reduced political neutrality, social license, and buy in from external stakeholders. |

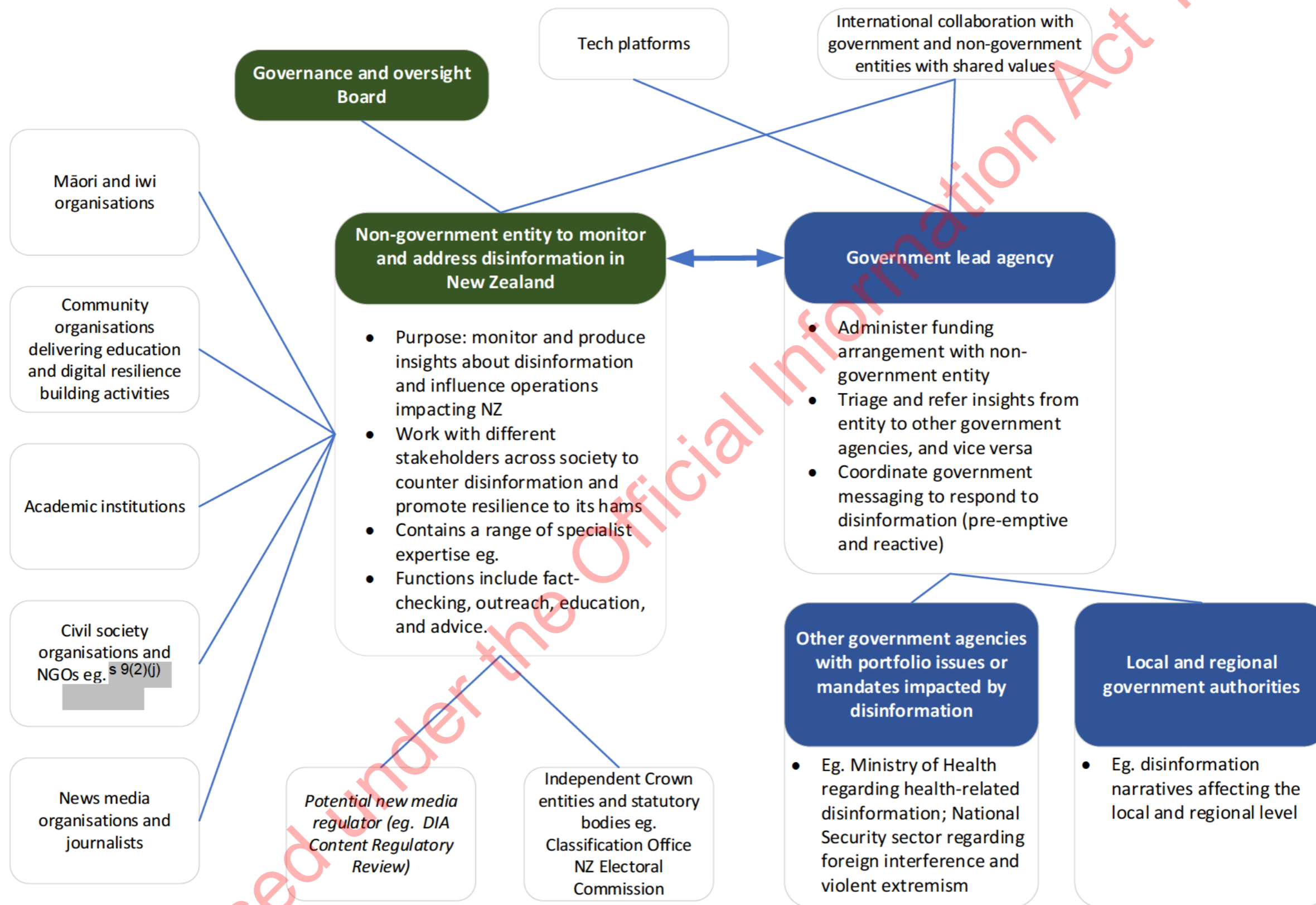
Attachment D: Assessment of different forms for the proposed entity

62. The following table sets out the high-level advantages and disadvantages of the following different options for the eventual form of the entity:

- a new standalone entity
- host the entity within a university
- host the entity within an existing NGO
- build capability across a looser network of affiliated groups.

| | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|--|
| A new standalone entity (recommended) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to design a bespoke and fit for purpose structure, and establish a new organisational identity and culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to take longer to establish and cost more in terms of corporate overheads • If mismanaged, risk it is mischaracterised as a tool of the state |
| Host the entity within a university (recommended) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A university is likely to have immediate credibility as a broadly non-partisan, independent, and 'critical perspective' from the start • Immediate access to resource (applied researchers, post-graduate students) • Potentially offers greater speed and cost efficiency, by leveraging existing corporate overheads, facilities, data infrastructure etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An academic perspective may dominate, and outputs may be too academic or theoretical (although this risk can be managed by engaging the right skills and diverse capabilities) • May limit involvement and access to data by independent researchers (who make up a significant portion of the more prominent disinformation researchers in NZ currently) |
| Host the entity within an existing NGO, eg. s 9(2)(j) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilises an existing structure and brand identity within the digital issues NGO space • Potentially offers greater speed and cost efficiency, by leveraging existing corporate overheads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for conflict with existing functions • These NGOs don't have this capability currently • The harms associated with disinformation manifest in the offline world as well • Some reputational issues with communities affected by disinformation |
| Build capability across a looser network of affiliated groups to carry out the functions envisaged | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a smaller target, provides for greater diversity, better leverages the range of smaller existing initiatives • Ideally, funding would be made available to support a wider network, <u>as well as</u> the substantive entity proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand's small scale and limited initial capability points towards consolidating expertise and capability in a substantive entity, rather than a dispersed network • Spreads finite government funding thin |

Attachment F: Diagram of relationships to the proposed entity under a potential future state





Briefing

UPDATE ON WORK TO COUNTER AND BUILD RESILIENCE TO DISINFORMATION

To: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Minister for National Security and Intelligence

| | | | |
|----------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Date | 22/07/2022 | Priority | Medium |
| Deadline | 27/07/2022 | Briefing Number | DPMC-2021/22-2526 |

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your feedback on early thinking for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand, and potential timeframes and funding for progressing the proposal.¹ Your s 6(a) meeting s 6(a), provides an opportunity to discuss your initial feedback with officials from the National Security Group.
2. This briefing seeks your approval to undertake a proactive release of the pack of declassified disinformation papers (Attachment B) that you approved for release to the Intelligence and Security Committee [DPMC-2021/22-2205 refers]. This will also facilitate providing these papers to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee (EDSI) in the event it pursues its work on disinformation further. We also seek your approval to provide an independent report (Attachment A) on monitoring disinformation to EDSI.

Executive Summary

3. There is currently a very limited, emergent, and dispersed capability to analyse and understand disinformation narratives in New Zealand's online information ecosystems. This undermines the ability for government and others to undertake effective action to counter disinformation and build resilience to its harms. This poses risks to New Zealand's national security and social cohesion.
4. At your s 6(a) meeting s 6(a), you asked for further advice on a proposal for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand and establishing better monitoring of disinformation.
5. In forming this advice, we have:

¹ For the purposes of this briefing, the term 'disinformation' is used as a catch-all term to refer to the spectrum of false and misleading information. This reflects that when we are considering the types of false and misleading information of most concern due to its harmful impact, this typically refers to disinformation.

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- a) considered the implications of the recent Microsoft report on the role of Russian disinformation in the conflict in Ukraine, which included a short New Zealand case study; and
- b) commissioned independent advice from Brainbox Institute Ltd to better understand the challenges and opportunities for monitoring disinformation in New Zealand and international best practice (Attachment A).

Proposed entity

6. DPMC's National Security Group (NSG) has developed initial thinking for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand (the entity).
7. The entity's purpose would be to monitor and produce insights about disinformation and influence operations impacting New Zealand. Using these insights, the entity would work with different stakeholders across society to counter disinformation narratives and promote societal resilience to its harms.
8. To carry out its functions, the entity would need access to a range of specialist expertise. This expertise will take time and cost to build in New Zealand. Prioritisation of key functions relating to 'monitoring' and 'insights' would likely be required first. At least initially, we are likely to need to procure services, expertise, tools, and capability training from offshore.
9. Our initial proposal is that the entity would operate independently from government, while at the same time cooperating closely with government and a range of other stakeholders. The entity would be funded by government to ensure the entity is well-resourced and able to be stood up at pace.
10. In terms of form, the entity would likely be established as a multi-stakeholder non-government organisation with a not-for-profit/not-for-dividend financial model, or an institute. The latter could be associated with a host university or an existing internet governance or safety entity (eg. such as s 9(2)(j)).
11. Most disinformation is legal and fits within definitions of protected speech. Independence from government will be important to mitigate legitimate and perceived concerns around privacy, freedom of expression and government influence over public discourse.
12. However, this independence may also mean less public accountability. If the entity receives most of its funding from government, the terms of the funding arrangement and how the arrangement is administered will be important to ensure accountability, legitimacy, and value for money.

Timeframes and funding

13. In terms of the time available to establish key functions and where the greatest threat from disinformation will come from next, an obvious concern is the potential impact of disinformation on the 2023 General Election. If this is indeed the next significant catalyst we need to prepare for (and there may well be others before then), this creates an ambitious timeframe for taking forward the entity proposal. This timeframe has implications for potential funding avenues eg. a Budget 2023 bid, a pre-Budget 2023 commitment, or a between Budget contingency.
14. The proposal to establish an entity could be scaled and sequenced in various ways. For example, we could consider:
 - a) Establishing a specific project to establish a taskforce focused on countering disinformation impacting the 2023 General Election

- b) Establishing a fund to support existing New Zealand providers monitoring disinformation and building community resilience to its harms, to build capability in the short term.
15. This may provide a pragmatic way to build capability over time, generating insights along the way that we can learn from, while still creating momentum. However, the risk is that without sufficient resource and impetus to generate critical mass, the initiative may not succeed against the scale of the challenges it would be tasked to overcome.

Progressing the proposal

16. Your feedback is sought on the advice in this briefing and will help to inform the direction of further detailed work, subject to your approval. NSG does not have the available resources to progress the proposals in this paper at pace. Separate advice is underway on prioritisation of NSG’s work programme, although adding the further development of this proposal to the work programme will require additional resource (either new or reprioritised from within the broader DPMC baseline).

Other work on disinformation

17. In addition to progressing policy work on the proposed multi-stakeholder entity, there is also a need to continuing progressing:
- a) A programme of government policy and legislative responses to strengthen the tools we have available across all levers to counter disinformation;
 - b) leadership and coordination of a better cross-government tactical response to disinformation, including initiatives to strengthen resilience to the harms of mis- and disinformation through education and enhancing social cohesion; and
 - c) international cooperation, alongside the Christchurch Call, to align New Zealand’s response with that of like-minded international partners.

Further information for EDSI

18. On 30 June, DPMC officials met with EDSI to discuss disinformation. We provided EDSI with a written briefing, a verbal presentation, and answered questions from Members.
19. This briefing seeks your approval to undertake a proactive release of the pack of declassified disinformation papers (Attachment B) that you approved for release to the Intelligence and Security Committee [DPMC-2021/22-2205 refers]. This will also facilitate providing these papers to EDSI in the event it pursues its work on disinformation further. We also seek your approval to provide an independent report (Attachment A) on monitoring disinformation to EDSI.

Recommendations

Proposed entity

- 1. **Provide** feedback on our initial thinking for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand, including its proposed purpose, functions, and form. **YES / NO**
- 2. **Agree** DPMC proceed to undertake further detailed work on the proposal. **YES / NO**

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- 3. **Note** DPMC's National Security Group does not have the available resources to progress the proposals in this paper at pace and that separate advice is underway on prioritisation of NSG's work programme.

Timing, scenarios and funding

- 4. **Indicate** whether you consider the 2023 General Election should drive timelines for progressing the entity proposal. YES / NO

- 5. **Indicate** whether you would like further advice on:
 - A project to establish a taskforce focused on countering disinformation impacting the 2023 General Election YES / NO
 - Establishing a fund to support existing New Zealand providers monitoring disinformation and building community resilience to its harms. YES / NO

- 6. **Indicate** whether you have a preferred approach for pursuing funding for the proposals outlined in this briefing (eg. a Budget 2023 bid, a pre-Budget 2023 commitment, or a between Budget contingency.) YES / NO

Further information for the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee

- 7. **Note** DPMC officials met with the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee on 30 June to provide a briefing on disinformation.
- 8. **Note** DPMC has received a report it commissioned from Brainbox Institute Ltd to better understand the challenges and opportunities for monitoring disinformation in New Zealand.
- 9. **Approve** the release of the Brainbox report (Attachment A) to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee in the event it pursues its work on disinformation further. YES / NO
- 10. **Note** you have previously approved the release of a pack of declassified disinformation papers (Attachment B) to the Intelligence and Security Committee [DPMC-2021/22-2205 refers].

11. **Approve** the pack of declassified disinformation papers (Attachment B) for proactive release and for release to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee in the event it pursues its work on disinformation further.

YES / NO



Tony Lynch
**Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group**

22/07/2022

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
**Minister for National Security and
Intelligence**

...../...../2022

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Contact for telephone discussion if required:

| Name | Position | Telephone | | 1st contact |
|---------------|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Tony Lynch | Deputy Chief Executive, National Security Group | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | ✓ |
| s 9(2)(g)(ii) | Principal Policy Advisor | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | s 9(2)(g)(ii) | |

Minister's office comments:

- Noted
- Seen
- Approved
- Needs change
- Withdrawn
- Not seen by Minister
- Overtaken by events
- Referred to

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

UPDATE ON WORK TO COUNTER AND BUILD RESILIENCE TO DISINFORMATION

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your feedback on early thinking for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand, and potential timeframes and funding for progressing the proposal.
2. Your s 6(a) meeting s 6(a) provides an opportunity to discuss your initial feedback with officials from the National Security Group.
3. This briefing also seeks your approval to release documents relating to disinformation to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee (EDSI) in the event it pursues its work on disinformation further.

Background

4. On 8 June, we provided you with an update on disinformation-related work at your National Security and Intelligence briefing [DPMC-2021/22-2219 refers], including:
 - a) DPMC's approach to the invitation from EDSI to provide a briefing on disinformation; and
 - b) a broader work programme to counter disinformation and build resilience to its harms.
5. You directed us to focus on the EDSI briefing in the first instance, and to come back to you with further advice on a proposal for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand and establishing better monitoring of disinformation. Since then:
 - a) On 13 June, DPMC received a report it had commissioned from Brainbox Institute Ltd to better understand the challenges and opportunities for monitoring disinformation in New Zealand. Brainbox is a NZ-based research and analysis consultancy with a focus on online content moderation, transparency, human rights, and tech regulation.
 - b) On 22 June, Microsoft released a report on the role of Russian disinformation in the conflict in Ukraine, which included a short New Zealand case study.²
 - c) On 29 June, you provided a keynote speech on disinformation and other online challenges at the Tech 4 Democracy Summit in Madrid.
 - d) On 30 June, DPMC officials met with EDSI to provide a briefing on disinformation.
6. These developments have informed the proposals in this briefing.

Implications of the Microsoft report

7. The Microsoft report found a sudden and pronounced spike in the consumption of Russian disinformation by New Zealanders, which increased by 30 percent relative to Australia and

² *Defending Ukraine: Early Lessons from the Cyber War*, Microsoft, June 2022, <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2022/06/22/defending-ukraine-early-lessons-from-the-cyber-war/>

the United States, in the build up to the February 2022 Parliamentary protest. The report also found a spike in Canada's consumption relative to the United States in late January to early February, coinciding with Canada's own 'Freedom convoy' protest.

8. Further work is needed between New Zealand officials and Microsoft to better understand the underlying data and these findings. As it stands, the Microsoft report highlighted several key points relevant to the proposals in this briefing:
 - a) Data needed to effectively assess and generate meaningful insights about disinformation narratives in NZ's online environments is held by the large tech companies (eg. Microsoft, Meta, and Google).
 - b) The capability and tools to undertake this kind of data analysis in New Zealand, including within academia and government agencies, is currently very limited (the following section provides an assessment of who is doing what currently).
 - c) The extent of disinformation deliberately propagated by foreign states being consumed in New Zealand is likely considerable, but we are not currently well set up as a country to identify and expose this.
9. There is undoubtedly a high degree of foreign influence on disinformation narratives in New Zealand. Foreign influence on New Zealand's disinformation landscape does not constitute 'foreign interference' (eg. activity by a foreign state or proxy that is intended to influence, disrupt, or subvert New Zealand's national interests through deceptive, covert, corruptive, or threatening means).
10. However, foreign interference is unlikely to be the correct threshold test to apply to state-sponsored disinformation campaigns, where diffusion of influence through the medium of both willing and unwitting accomplices occurs at scale and pace across multiple platforms. We likely need new terminology to describe what is occurring regarding the role of foreign states.
11. New Zealand may be targeted by a state-sponsored disinformation campaign in future. Covert methods of disseminating disinformation and amplification by domestic actors could make attribution to a foreign state difficult. A foreign state's disinformation campaign could aim to exacerbate social divisions, undermine trust in our democratic system, or shape New Zealanders' opinions on issues that matter to the foreign state. s 6(a)

Current monitoring of disinformation in New Zealand

12. There are currently significant challenges to effectively monitoring disinformation narratives in New Zealand, including a lack of clear mandate for the work, technical issues, and a lack of capability and resource. This reflects:
 - a) The limited, emergent, and dispersed capability in New Zealand to analyse and understand disinformation narratives, which sits across a range of government and non-government organisations; and
 - b) Government has limited visibility of what is happening with domestic groups propagating disinformation narratives. This lack of visibility undermines the ability for government and others to undertake effective action to counter disinformation narratives and build resilience to its harms. This poses risks to New Zealand's national security and social cohesion.
13. The capability that does exist within government and outside government is summarised below.

Within government

14. The Ministry of Health has established a small Disinformation Assessment and Response Team (DART), to respond to health disinformation identified through public reporting and open-source online environment scanning. DART also assists other agencies with disinformation relating to individual agency mandates.
15. The Department of Internal Affairs' Digital Safety Group engages with disinformation content in relation to its mandates for online safety and countering violent extremism online. NZ Police's small open-source intelligence unit monitors and assesses disinformation as it relates to Police's functions. The intelligence and security agencies have a limited role, when disinformation is clearly related to national security threats, such as violent extremism. Most disinformation is legal and fits within definitions of protected speech – making it difficult and/or inappropriate to address using traditional law enforcement and intelligence tools before the harms become apparent.

Outside government

16. Outside government, news media play a role in 'fact-checking' disinformation narratives and providing factual and balanced reporting. Social media companies play a role in moderating content on their platforms, flagging or removing harmful content, and linking to factual sources of information. Civil society groups and activists play an important role in identifying and describing disinformation patterns and networks, and identifying impacts, sometimes earlier than governments or news media are able to. There are various independent researchers, NGOs, academics, and journalists analysing disinformation narratives in New Zealand.
17. For example, The Disinformation Project has produced several reports analysing COVID-19 related disinformation narratives.³ DPMC's COVID-19 Group has entered into a short contract with The Disinformation Project to provide analysis of disinformation published on social media platforms related to the COVID-19 response. This is to provide DPMC with information to inform efforts to build resilience to COVID-19 disinformation.

Independent assessment of appropriate frameworks for social media analysis for New Zealand (Brainbox report)

18. DPMC's COVID-19 Group also commissioned a short project from Brainbox Institute Ltd to better understand the challenges and opportunities for monitoring disinformation in New Zealand. Key findings include:
 - a) There are numerous difficulties inherent in detecting and analysing disinformation in social media communications, relating to definitional issues, access to data, and the sheer scale of online communications.
 - b) Government faces particular challenges if it were to carry out analysis of internet-based communications, relating to concerns around privacy, the right to freedom of expression, and perceived government influence over public discourse.
 - c) A non-government entity with appropriate governance structures, secure funding, and incorporating multi-stakeholder perspectives and capabilities, is likely to be the best vehicle to undertake social media analysis to generate insights about disinformation narratives.

³ For example, refer *Working Paper: The murmuration of information disorders, Aotearoa New Zealand's mis- and disinformation ecologies and the Parliament Protest*, The Disinformation Project, May 2022, <https://thedisinopproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The-murmuration-of-information-disorders-May-2022-Report-FULL-VERSION.pdf>

- d) These insights can then enable different stakeholders across society to take effective action to reduce the harms caused by disinformation, including actions by government agencies and public authorities.
 - e) While automated data analysis tools and machine learning are useful, there is still a high need for manual assessment by trained staff to analyse disinformation effectively.
19. Brainbox's report *Appropriate frameworks for social media analysis in New Zealand* is attached to this briefing as Attachment A.

Proposal for a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand

20. We have developed early thinking on a multi-stakeholder entity to address disinformation in New Zealand (the entity). This has been informed by the findings of the Brainbox report. DPMC would like to test with you:
- a) key features of this proposal before developing them further, including the entity's purpose, functions, and form
 - b) potential timelines, scenarios, and funding pathways required to progress this proposal, including at pace.
21. Your feedback would help to inform the direction of further work.

Purpose

22. The purpose of the entity would be to monitor and produce insights about disinformation and influence operations impacting New Zealand, with a focus on New Zealand's online information ecosystems. Using these evidence-based insights, the entity would work with different stakeholders across society to counter disinformation narratives and promote societal resilience to its harms.
23. While we recommend the entity focus on disinformation, the entity should be agile enough to respond to other digital resilience issues as may emerge in the future. Technology, threats, and solutions are likely to continue to evolve rapidly.
24. This agility would help to generate critical mass and economies of scale where appropriate to overcome the challenge posed by New Zealand's small scale, limited resources, and the need to build capability in responding to digital resilience issues from a very small starting position.
25. DPMC is mindful of potential interdependencies between the proposed entity and proposals that may arise from DIA's Content Regulatory Review led by the Minister for Internal Affairs. There is also a need for alignment with existing organisations and agencies with responsibilities for online harms, to avoid duplication or introducing undue complexity.

Functions

26. The entity would carry out the purpose set out above by undertaking some combination of the following functions (subject to funding and capability constraints):
- a) **Monitoring** - Undertake open-source social media analysis and other open-source intelligence (OSINT) monitoring of disinformation narratives impacting New Zealand.
 - b) **Insights** – Produce empirical insights on New Zealand's disinformation landscape and publish these through assessment reports available to the public, journalists, and

government. Undertake research and support academic research activities in universities.

- c) **Fact checking** – Undertake fact checking and debunking of key disinformation narratives circulating in New Zealand online environments, including supporting other organisations to do this (eg. the NZ Electoral Commission with respect to disinformation narratives undermining election integrity).
 - d) **Outreach** – The entity would undertake outreach activities to network, coordinate, advocate, build expertise, and share its analysis and insights with a range of stakeholders, including as follows:
 - o domestically, with a range of non-governmental organisations and public authorities, including providing support to help limit the spread and harms of disinformation and with the security agencies to marry up open-source monitoring with classified intelligence where appropriate (for example, in relation to countering violent extremism)
 - o internationally, with institutions with similar functions and values, including to share and develop expertise.
 - e) **Education** - Publish information to raise awareness. Carry out training activities and provide best practice guidance on topics related to disinformation, open to all relevant stakeholders, including fact-checking actors, government, community groups, researchers, and journalists.
 - f) **Advice** - Make policy recommendations to government and agencies based on its analysis and research to ensure policy responses and other actions are grounded in evidence. This may include providing specific investigations or advisory services in response to commissions.
27. It will take time for the entity to build the capacity to undertake these functions, and prioritisation of key functions relating to 'monitoring' and 'insights' would likely be required first.
28. Some of these activities are happening currently in a piecemeal, ad hoc, uncoordinated and underfunded way across a variety of organisations. The entity proposal is intended to create a clear mandate, stable funding, and consolidated capability for the work. This would likely drive a degree of consolidation of existing expertise and provide a formal structure to grow expertise further.

Functions out of scope

Delivering education and resilience building activities directly to communities

29. Our initial view is that delivering education and resilience building activities directly to communities is best undertaken by non-governmental organisations with strong links to communities. Trusted voices within communities are likely to be more successful than an entity with a national focus that also undertakes a monitoring function, particularly for communities that are harder to reach and have higher levels of mistrust of institutions, who are also likely to be groups who most urgently require initiatives to strengthen resilience to disinformation. The proposed entity would work closely with relevant community organisations and providers to share its insights and build capability.

Accessing non-public spaces

30. DPMC's initial view is that the entity would generally seek to utilise open-source intelligence, rather than attempt to gain access to closed social media channels, private groups, and forums in non-public spaces. Such access would likely require some degree of covert

capabilities, which could undermine the entities' ability to build public trust through transparency. This presents a difficult trade-off, as some of the most concerning disinformation occurs in closed platforms, for example regarding radicalisation and violent extremism. Further consideration of this trade-off is required.

31. NSG will need to undertake further policy work to consider the role of the intelligence agencies in relation to disinformation narratives (including both open-source intelligence functions and with respect to non-public spaces), as well as how best to combine, refer, and triage open-source monitoring of disinformation narratives with classified intelligence where appropriate (for example, in relation to countering violent extremism and terrorism). The recommendations of the independent review of the Intelligence and Security Act 2017 will be an important element of that work.

Expertise needed to undertake these functions

32. To carry out these functions, the entity would need access to a range of specialist expertise. For example:
- a) Data analysts, data visualisation specialists, and open-source intelligence practitioners
 - b) Access to, or ability to develop, appropriate tools to undertake analysis
 - c) Researchers and policy analysts
 - d) Legal expertise in freedom of expression, privacy, digital issues, and platform issues
 - e) Expertise in strategic communications, stakeholder engagement and working in partnership with iwi and Māori
 - f) Deep knowledge of the New Zealand socio-political and cultural context, including with disinformation issues in different communities, capability to analyse foreign language media, knowledge of Mātauranga Māori and Te Ao Māori.⁴
 - g) Leadership, corporate functions, and other organisational requirements relative to its size and purpose.
33. This expertise will take time and cost to build in New Zealand. At least initially, we are likely to need to procure services, expertise, tools, and capability training from offshore.

Form

34. In terms of the form of the entity, key features of our initial proposal is that the entity would be:
- a) led and operated independently from government or any government agency or public authority, while at the same time cooperating closely with government, academia, media, civil society groups, Māori/iwi, to develop multi-stakeholder solutions, and unite different perspectives and disciplines around shared values;
 - b) supported and funded by government to ensure the entity is well-resourced and able to be stood up at pace (funding from philanthropic and other sources would be explored later); and

⁴ Local knowledge is critical to parse disinformation narratives accurately, as content is often locally specific, intentionally ambiguous or ironic (eg. to create plausible deniability as to intent) and has distinct vocabulary and terminology.

- c) established around principles of evidence-based analysis, integrity, transparency and building trust.
35. Our initial view is that the likely form of the entity would be as a multi-stakeholder non-government organisation with a not-for-profit/not-for-dividend financial model, or an institute, potentially associated with a host university or an existing internet governance or safety entity (eg. s 9(2)(j) [redacted]). We envisage the entity would sit under a Governance Board, providing either advisory or decision-making guidance. Further work is needed to consider the Board's functions, and how the Board would be appointed.
36. While there is potential for university affiliation or leadership (regarding media studies, digital issues, data analysis etc), if the entity were to be too closely associated with a university, we see a risk that its outputs may be too academic or theoretical, rather than producing insights that are practical and actionable (this has been an issue with some of the monitoring being produced in New Zealand currently). In any respect, there is still an important role for academic analysis and insights in the entities' work.
37. Independence from government will be important to mitigate legitimate and perceived concerns around privacy, freedom of expression and government influence over public discourse. However, this independence may also mean less public accountability. If the entity receives most of its funding from government, the terms of the funding arrangement and how the arrangement is administered will be important to ensure accountability, legitimacy, and value for money.

European Digital Media Observatory

38. We have looked to the European Digital Media Observatory as a relevant model.⁵ This is a network of eight hubs located across Europe, each with a specific geographic focus on a national or multinational area, as well as working together as a network across the European Union to detect and analyse disinformation campaigns, improve public awareness, and design effective responses.
39. Each hub has a coordinating or host institution (usually a university) and a range of 'consortium partners' (usually a range of groups across media, academic, civil society, fact-checking) who contribute to the work. The hubs are funded through grants from the EU but operate independently from the EU and public authorities. Additional hubs are planned to be established in 2022 to expand the coverage of the network across the EU.
40. We will continue to explore relevant international models as we progress this work. Given the cross-border nature of much disinformation, it will likely prove useful for the entity to build international affiliations (and, potentially, effort-sharing arrangements).

Timelines and funding to advance the proposal

41. New Zealand has likely got through the worst of the COVID-19 related disinformation, which reached its most visible culmination with the events during the Parliament occupation.
42. It is difficult to anticipate where the greatest threat from disinformation will come from next. An obvious concern is the potential impact of disinformation on the 2023 General Election. If this is indeed the next significant catalyst we need to prepare for (and there may well be others before then), this creates an ambitious timeframe for taking forward the entity proposal. This briefing seeks your initial view on this assessment.
43. DPMC currently has no funding specifically allocated to a work programme to counter disinformation. Some funding has been utilised from the COVID-19 response to counter

⁵ <https://edmo.eu/>

COVID-19 disinformation, and the Ministry of Health has established a small operational function to counter health-related disinformation. This means that progressing the proposals in this paper at pace would have significant implications for NSG's policy work programme. A project team comprised of specialist expertise in addition to policy expertise will be required to deliver a more detailed proposal.

- 44. Going faster and procuring expertise from overseas (which is likely to be needed to some degree under any scenario) would have commensurate resourcing implications.
- 45. The proposal to establish an entity could be scaled and sequenced in various ways. This may provide a pragmatic way to build capability over time, generating insights along the way that we can learn from, while still creating momentum. However, the risk is that without sufficient resource and impetus to generate critical mass, the initiative may not succeed against the scale of the challenges it would be tasked to overcome.
- 46. Some potential scenarios are outlined below, and further advice can be developed on request.

A taskforce focused on the 2023 General Election, utilising international expertise and capability building

- 47. One scenario would be to focus on getting the most critical functions relating to monitoring and generating insights up and running in order to detect disinformation ahead of the 2023 General Election.
- 48. The Government could support the establishment of a New Zealand-based civil society taskforce to specifically focus on this purpose. This would then generate insights as to how NZ could set up a multi-stakeholder entity outside government on a more enduring basis.
- 49. For this project, international expertise could be procured to help coordinate and build domestic capability within New Zealand, potentially importing tools and products that are tried and tested elsewhere and adapting them for our context.
- 50. As an example of the kind of services available internationally, s 9(2)(j) [redacted] a Canadian not-for-profit that has supported the Canadian Government's efforts to counter COVID-19 disinformation, delivered projects in various countries, and developed products to build capability to understand, counter and strengthen resilience to disinformation. s 9(2)(j) [redacted]

[redacted] A robust procurement process would need to be developed to secure effective services and deliver value for money.

Establish a fund for existing New Zealand providers

- 51. Another scenario would be to establish a fund to provide grants to effective existing community groups and NGOs to undertake disinformation research and reporting, and to deliver education and resilience-building activities.
- 52. The fund would be designed to increase the financial sustainability, capability, and scale of these organisations, as well as to reach particular communities more susceptible to the harms of disinformation (for example, s 9(2)(j) [redacted] a not-for-profit organisation that educates

s 9(2)(j) [redacted]

New Zealand communities and government about the social impacts of technology). Such organisations are doing useful work currently but are under resourced and unable to scale up.

- 53. A downside of this approach is that it is unlikely to drive consolidation of existing capability unless this is an explicit goal of the criteria to receive funding (eg. to deliver more balanced, moderated outputs and to build shared capability under a multi-stakeholder grouping).

Budget 2023 timelines

- 54. Funding would need to be allocated to progress the proposals outlined in this briefing. The table below sets out an indicative timeline for a typical Budget 2023 bid development. This process would not be fast enough to have an effective disinformation initiative in place ahead of the 2023 General Election.
- 55. This indicates we may need to consider a pre-Budget commitment or a between budget contingency initiative if it is decided to stand something meaningful up before the pre-election period begins around mid-2023.

This briefing seeks your initial view of the funding approaches outlined above.

| Milestones | Approximate timeframe |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Policy development | July to September 2022 |
| Develop Budget bid | September to December 2022 |
| Pre-Budget assessment process | January to March 2023 |
| Budget 2023 | May 2023 |
| House rises for pre-election period | June 2023 |
| New Zealand General Election | September 2023 |

Risks and mitigations

- 56. Further work is needed to better understand the risks, and to develop mitigations, associated with the proposal. Key risks at this early stage include the following:
 - a) There is a risk the entity would be unable to access the expertise and data needed to establish the functions sought in a timely manner.
 - b) The establishment of the entity would likely drive a degree of consolidation of existing expertise. There is a risk that consolidating existing expertise into one entity may make it a larger target for efforts to undermine it, compared to a more dispersed ad hoc model (conversely, there is a risk that, as at present, the ad-hoc model continues to struggle to reach scale, absent significant government investment).
 - c) There is a risk that NSG is unable to adequately resource policy work on the proposed entity absent further additional resource (including skills and expertise to establish the entity we do not currently hold). Our current level of resourcing is better suited to progressing leadership and coordination of a better cross-government response to disinformation.

Further information for the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee

57. On 30 June, DPMC officials met with EDSI to provide a briefing on disinformation. DPMC provided EDSI with a written briefing, a verbal presentation, and answered questions from Members.
58. DPMC will continue to support EDSI with its work on disinformation in the event it decides to pursue this work further.
59. DPMC seeks your approval to provide the Brainbox report to EDSI (Attachment A). The report sets out clearly the challenges for government in responding to disinformation, particularly in terms of social media analysis, and why the solutions are likely to be best placed outside of government through multi-stakeholder and civil society solutions. The report provides an independent view on the issues, informed by international best practice, that may serve to develop cross-party consensus around the potential solutions.
60. DPMC seeks your approval to undertake a proactive release of the pack of declassified disinformation papers (Attachment B) that you approved for release to the Intelligence and Security Committee [DPMC-2021/22-2205 refers]. This will also facilitate providing these papers to EDSI if needed to inform their work.

Next steps

61. Your feedback is sought on the proposals in this paper. This work is on the agenda for discussion at your s 6(a) meeting with s 6(a).
62. In addition to progressing policy work on the proposed multi-stakeholder entity, there is also a need to continuing progressing:
 - a) A programme of government policy and legislative responses to strengthen the tools we have available across all levers to counter disinformation;
 - b) leadership and coordination of a better cross-government tactical response to disinformation, including initiatives to strengthen resilience to the harms of mis- and disinformation through education and enhancing social cohesion; and
 - c) international cooperation, alongside the Christchurch Call, to align New Zealand's response with that of like-minded international partners.

Consultation

63. DPMC has undertaken brief and targeted consultation on the advice in this briefing with key agency contacts in DIA, MCH, MoH, Police, and MFAT and colleagues in the Policy Advisory Group.
64. Agencies were broadly supportive of the proposed entity, but want to ensure the initiative is aligned with other government work programmes (eg. DIA's Content Regulatory Review) and positioned within a complementary programme of work to ensure government is well-positioned to counter disinformation and foreign interference, including any regulatory or legislative changes required (as per paragraph 62 above).

| Attachments: | | |
|---------------|--------------|---|
| Attachment A: | UNCLASSIFIED | Appropriate frameworks for social media analysis for New Zealand, Brainbox, June 2022 |
| Attachment B: | UNCLASSIFIED | ISC pack of declassified disinformation papers for proactive release |

**Attachment B is out of scope.*

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

ATTACHMENT A

Appropriate frameworks for social media analysis for New Zealand,
Brainbox, June 2022

Refused under section 18(d) of the OIA

Publicly available here: [https://
www.brainbox.institute/projects/appropriate-frameworks-for-social-media-
analysis%3A-report-for-the-department-of-prime-minister-and-cabinet-\(nz\)](https://www.brainbox.institute/projects/appropriate-frameworks-for-social-media-analysis%3A-report-for-the-department-of-prime-minister-and-cabinet-(nz))

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



IN CONFIDENCE, DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Disinformation multi-stakeholder entity

PURPOSE: To “pitch-back” to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet what a multi-stakeholder entity for disinformation could look like in New Zealand.

DATE WRITTEN: October 2022

Background and purpose of this document

1. This document serves as InternetNZ’s response to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s (DPMC) *Proposal for a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand* (the Proposal). In doing so, we note that DPMC’s document was in confidence, draft for discussion and not government policy.
2. Accordingly, this response from InternetNZ is in confidence and a draft for discussion, and should not be taken in any way to convey commitment from InternetNZ to the matters and body under development in these discussions.
3. This response is to further the conversation between DPMC and InternetNZ on how this concept may develop. In doing so, we also refer to the earlier suggestion made to DPMC on how InternetNZ may assist in coordinating the multi-stakeholder community in New Zealand on issues of mis- and disinformation, provided to DPMC in February of 2022.
4. We think the key opportunity and challenge is to enable and support the capacity that now exists while building a vehicle for longer-term, more systematic, and more multistakeholder approaches to mis- dis- and malinformation issues in Aotearoa.
5. We look forward to continuing this discussion with you.

What we heard from DPMC and discussed in our meeting

6. What we understand of the requirement from this body is informed by the Proposal and the subsequent meeting held on it in Auckland on 29 September 2022, and subsequent discussions with DPMC staff members.

7. As the Proposal states:

2. *DPMC's National Security Group (NSG) has developed an initial proposal for a non-government entity to address disinformation in New Zealand (the entity). [rest of paragraph removed].*

And:

4. *The entity's purpose would be to monitor and produce insights about disinformation and influence operations impacting New Zealand. Using these insights, the entity would work with different stakeholders across society (government, media, academia, civil society etc.) to respond to disinformation narratives and promote societal resilience to its harms.*

5. *The entity would likely be funded by government to ensure it has a stable funding source, but other sources could be explored later.*

6. *Most disinformation is legal and fits within definitions of protected speech. Independence from government will be important to mitigate legitimate and perceived concerns around privacy, freedom of expression, government surveillance, and government influence over public discourse.*

8. To answer the question posed at the end of this introductory section; yes, the purpose and rationale of this body make sense to us, at a high level. We wish to reiterate that the requirements are clear from our point of view: a method of driving greater coordination, collaboration and action on addressing the challenges of disinformation in New Zealand, in a multistakeholder fashion. The Entity proposed in our discussions can meet those requirements. We have been discussing this with DPMC and government in general for some time, certainly since the Christchurch Call process, and we remain willing to work on this together.

9. We understand that this body needs to have the following participation and involvement objectives:

- Be multistakeholder. In traditional Internet governance terms, that means involving government, business, technical, academic and civil society perspectives. In a New Zealand context, InternetNZ includes Māori in this multistakeholder model as well.
- That it needs to involve the social media platforms that are the particular vector through which many disinformation challenges emerge. This makes sense as the *business* component of the multistakeholder model too.
- That it needs to involve traditional media entities either directly or via collective bodies, such as the Media Council.

- That this should involve as many of, if not all of, the parties that are active in disinformation in New Zealand. As the small democracy that we are, we both envisage this as achievable and necessary. Capacity is too low to leave out people working in the field, which needs instead to be fostered and grown. Known examples of these small number of parties include Tohatoha, The Disinformation Project and Brainbox.
- Consideration should also be given to finding ways to engage with those entities that have expressed interest in or concern about work on disinformation. Such entities may include the New Zealand Council of Civil Liberties and Tech Liberty.

10. We also understand that it is intended to have the functions outlined in section 7 of the Proposal, with our commentary on each of these as follows:

a) *Monitoring - Undertake social media analysis and other open-source intelligence (OSINT) monitoring of disinformation narratives impacting New Zealand.*

We understand this to be in the spirit of thematic summary and risk identification - in our discussion, we explored hypothetical examples such as:

- "Chemtrail narratives are on the rise on platform Y" as an example of a non-risky narrative.
- "Illegitimacy of the government narratives are on the rise on platform Z" as an example of a riskier narrative.

Monitoring of this nature requires the following functional capabilities of the Entity:

- The ability to gather information from the platforms (whether through normal use of their services, special provision for access, or both).
- The ability to analyse this information at scale and with local context.
- The ability to discern which information is relevant to communities, shared institutions, or the broader public interest in New Zealand.
- The ability to classify potential risks indicated by the narratives and behaviour patterns presented.
- Doing this work in a way that builds trust with diverse communities (eg personnel, governance and oversight, working relationships)

We see a particular need for this monitoring work to be established in a way that is more transparent to and informed by relevant communities than conventional security and intelligence monitoring work, to help build trust.

We, and DPMC, know that this sort that these abilities are present in the wider New Zealand civil society community, particularly through the "Internet Weather Report" produced by Tohatoha. We are curious as to whether that style of monitoring is what is envisaged in this component.

b) *Insights – Produce empirical insights on New Zealand’s disinformation landscape and publish these through assessment reports available to the public, journalists, and government. Undertake research and support academic research activities in universities.*

We see insight as a corollary of monitoring and rendering that monitoring output visible. We are also aware that DPMC has indicated that the Entity is not envisaged as a funder of this work per se, and thus we see it as more of a commissioning party of outputs from parties around the wider multistakeholder community.

c) *Fact checking – Undertake fact-checking and debunking of key disinformation narratives circulating in New Zealand’s online environments, including supporting other organisations to do this (eg. the NZ Electoral Commission with respect to disinformation narratives undermining election integrity).*

As we discussed at our meeting, we are concerned that fact-checking is the most contentious potential function of the Entity. Fact-checking has evolved to be inherently complicated, resource intensive and conflicted as a function. We suggest that this is removed from the functional aspirations of the Entity in the first instance, and instead that the Entity looks to commission this at a later stage.

d) *Outreach – The entity would undertake outreach activities to network, coordinate, advocate, build expertise, and share its analysis and insights with a range of stakeholders, including as follows:*

- o *domestically, with a range of both government and non-governmental organisations, including providing support to help limit the spread and harms of disinformation, and with the security agencies to marry up open-source monitoring with classified intelligence where appropriate (for example, in relation to countering violent extremism or foreign interference)*

- o *internationally, with institutions with similar functions and values, including to share and develop expertise.*

We think this function is particularly important. We agree with the sentiment DPMC shared when we met that New Zealand does not have an established depth of Civil Society parties to participate in these matters. While outreach is one manner through which the Entity may deepen capacity in Civil Society and the community, investment in this capacity is also a fundamentally missing component of the New Zealand approach compared to other jurisdictions - most notably Europe, as DPMC itself acknowledges.

e) *Education – Publish information to raise awareness. Carry out training activities and provide best practice guidance on topics related to*

disinformation, open to all relevant stakeholders, including fact-checking actors, government, community groups, researchers, and journalists.

With the noted caveat above in point c) regarding fact checking, this function is laudable and necessary to share the guidance, resources, evidence and insight with the wider New Zealand community.

f) Advice - Make policy recommendations to government and agencies based on its analysis and research to ensure policy responses and other actions are grounded in evidence. This may include providing specific investigations or advisory services in response to commissions.

Ideally, the advice component would feature both those outputs identified by the Entity and those commissioned by it. Either way, regular communication with the government to check the utility, destination and requirements of any policy advice would be useful - not having these outputs unable to influence the earlier stages of policy development by the government would be a lost opportunity. This then speaks to the requirement for a close, understood and honoured relationship between the Entity and government.

How the Entity could operate - our design considerations

11. The Proposal considers how the Entity could operate:

11. Our initial view is that the likely form of the entity would be as a standalone non-government organisation with a not-for-profit/not-for-dividend financial model, or an institute, potentially associated with a host university or an existing internet governance or safety entity (eg. such as Internet NZ or Netsafe).

12. This corresponds with the three options we've considered options for how the Entity could operate:

- Inside InternetNZ.
- Inside another entity, such as a University.
- Separate incorporation.

13. The **inside InternetNZ** option is attractive because it appears to solve for institutional depth and resilience in a manner that is rare in New Zealand. We have demonstrated that capability by hosting similar bodies to what the Entity could be, including:

- The Digital Equity Coalition of Aotearoa (DECA), which is otherwise separate in its governance and operations, but due to considerations of incorporation, administration and employment is effectively incorporated into InternetNZ.

- The Christchurch Call Advisory Network (CCAN), which is also separate in its governance and operations but requires similar incorporation through InternetNZ.

While we see this as a model that we are experienced in, we have also learned the limitations of this style of hosting. Our experience shows that the administration costs are significant, and InternetNZ does not have the spare organisational capacity to deliver without more resourcing. We estimate the real cost of providing pseudo-incorporation through service to be approximately 30-40% of the total value of the operation of these entities.

We have also learned that InternetNZ's participation in these entities is hampered by holding the administrative role, as we are wearing "two hats" - as the effective incorporating party our service-providing obligations can come at the cost of our substantive participation in these multistakeholder bodies. From a broader perspective on capacity building, this can be a big loss, as InternetNZ is often the only independently resourced voice on key issues.

For these reasons - cost and participation - we are reluctant to replicate this model for the Entity.

14. The **inside another entity** option begs the question of where to host. As the Proposal and our discussions identify, there are limited options in New Zealand with the capability and resilience to host this well. This is in part due to the more tactical and short-term basis upon which New Zealand has engaged with civil society entities, in comparison to Europe which has more mature and varied initiatives in this space.

A university would perhaps solve these issues; however, we agree with the Proposal about the different challenges that then give rise to, specifically:

12. *While there is potential for university affiliation or leadership (regarding media studies, digital issues, data analysis etc), if the entity were to be too closely associated with a university, we see a risk that its outputs may be too theoretical, rather than producing more immediate insights that are practical and actionable. In any respect, there is still an important role for academic analysis and insights in the entities' work.*

We also believe that universities are better placed as part of the multi-stakeholder mix of participants in the Entity, rather than as its hosts. In addition, we may also be concerned about the inherent competition and conflict that may arise from selecting a specific university to host the Entity, and how that may discourage participation from others in a space where participation and resources are already limited.

15. Ultimately, we believe that **separate incorporation** is the most logical method of constructing the Entity.

A straw person for the Entity

16. As a method of fulfilling the separate incorporation design, we present a straw person for the Entity based on the model of the Innovation Partnership which operated from 2014 to 2017.

The Innovation Partnership was a network of organisations that supported digital innovation in New Zealand across business, education and government. The Partnership connected industry, government and not-for-profits, commissioned research into important issues, and supported and promoted innovative digital projects.

The Innovation Partnership started hosted inside a public relations agency, before moving to incorporate as a trust.

The Innovation Partnership had four primary interfaces:

- The heart of the Partnership was the multistakeholder forum meetings held for the participating parties, across the stakeholder sets identified. These numbered between 30-50 entities who gathered on a quarterly basis to share information about ideas, projects and initiatives, and both coordinated and collaborated on realising the potential of these to the shared vision of the Partnership.
- An Executive Director role, who was the operational leader, representative, chair, spokesperson and embodiment of the Partnership. The Executive Director delivered to the objectives of the Partnership, as well as played an important role in recruitment and participation in the multistakeholder forum.
- In between meetings, the Trust Board of these entities that made substantial financial contributions to the Innovation Partnership met to govern the organisation, guide its strategy and direct the work of the Executive Director. This ensured that the Partnership was active and developing the networks, opportunities and collaborations between the meetings.
- Substantial engagement across the wider information technology sector and the general public, through inviting stakeholder groups into subject-specific meetings of the Partnership. These were intended to exploit the intersection between issues of digital innovation and industry-specific considerations - how digital innovation could drive opportunities and outcomes elsewhere.

17. To apply this Innovation Partnership model to the Entity:

- The multistakeholder forum component should be the large, all-comers body that would feature participation from all of the entities involved in disinformation in New Zealand. The expectation of these parties would be to participate in the meetings of the multistakeholder forum at a senior level; to share information about

objectives, activities and contributions to disinformation in Aotearoa, and to share resources to achieve outcomes on disinformation in Aotearoa. Participation in this multistakeholder forum component would be by invitation, and would always seek to maintain a balance between the components of the multistakeholder community in disinformation in New Zealand.

- The Executive Director role is both the “hands” of the Entity, and is likely to be one of the more significant cost elements. Particularly in the first instance, building and recruiting the multistakeholder community would be a primary outcome of this role, then moving into the execution of the collaboration and coordination objectives.
- The Trust Board equivalent would represent at least one of each of the constituent stakeholder groups in the multistakeholder community. This body would be responsible for governance, strategy and oversight of the Executive Director. The expectation of Trust Board participation or eligibility may be tied to a significant contribution to the collective aims of the Entity - be it financial, informational or outputs.
- Public outputs, education and engagement as identified in the Proposal.

18. The actual means of incorporation of such a body then is a level of detail down from this structure above. We see two broad options:

- There are entities that provide pseudo-incorporation as a service and operate on a contractual basis of output and employment. These entities are designed to provide an easier pathway for new charitable vehicles to start up while managing the obligations of incorporation for them - essentially providing bank accounts, payments and reporting services. This may be a suitable start-up option for a period of time.
- Jump straight to either a Trust or an Incorporated Society structure, with the former probably preferred. This may also be a sequenced outcome following a period in the pseudo-incorporation model.

19. While we believe this Innovation Partnership style model is one particular manner that lends itself to the vision in the Proposal, we must highlight one particular shortcoming of it: that it is wholly reliant on all the ongoing viability of all of the multistakeholder participants to continue to operate.

The vast majority of the Innovation Partnership participants had the security of resourcing to continue to participate and collaborate in this forum in the long run. This security of resourcing allowed the Partnership to flourish.

We are concerned that that isn't the case in the wider disinformation community in New Zealand. We are aware that a number of the parties that would ideally form part of this multistakeholder network do not have

sufficient confidence or clarity in their resourcing to participate in this manner.

We understand that DPMC does not see the Entity as a funding provider. However, we think there may be a need for mechanisms to fund work and connections across New Zealand's disinformation multistakeholder community.

There is a risk that the Entity could start up and not be able to achieve these necessary multistakeholder ambitions due to the precariousness of some of the desired participants.

20. At the very least, we believe that the Entity needs to have a connection to funding instruments - either to purchase deliverables, outputs and resources from members of this multistakeholder community or to fund their ongoing participation and existence. If the Entity was able to recommend to the government and other funders worthwhile investments to make, from a defined pool of financial resources, this would go some way to meet this risk.

Of course, such a mechanism of referral for funding also enhances the outputs of the Entity too, and allows other mechanisms for collaboration - such as through collaboration with other funding parties.

Answers to questions in the Proposal

21. *How do you think non-government groups and individuals should be involved in the establishment of the proposed entity?*
- We believe that the first step should be to build the multistakeholder forum of participants, as described in the Innovation Partnership model above.
 - From that wider network, a smaller set of parties to form a governance layer would then be selected - mindful of the expectation of substantial commitment to the Entity's work.
22. *What would it take for the entity proposal could be driven and led independently from the government?*
- We hope that the government is prepared to participate in the Entity in the same, equal basis that a genuine multistakeholder body requires - on an equal basis, and without reference to the financial contributions government may make.
23. *What processes or resources would be needed?*
- The primary resources will be financial. The Innovation Partnership operated on a core budget of approximately \$500,000 per annum. This included meeting costs, incorporation costs and Executive Director expenses.

- However, specific outputs were in addition to this and were fundraised for or contributed to separately depending on those members of the multistakeholder community that were interested in seeing it happen.
- The scale of output envisaged thus is the primary determinant of the funding required - if more is expected to be coordinated, collaborated upon and done from the list in section 9 of this document, then that will naturally cost more. The \$500,000 estimate is largely just for the existence of the body rather than specific outputs.
- By government endorsing the Entity on the purpose outlined in the Proposal, this then gives the mandate for the start-up Executive Director to recruit participant entities from the multistakeholder community and set the expectation of additional contribution from some of these entities to this collective.
- The government may thus be able to scale its financial involvement on the basis of matched funding to other participants at some ratio.

24. *Which groups or individuals are best placed to be involved in or lead this work?*

- We have outlined which parties we see being involved in section 8 of this document.

25. *What role should government play alongside others?*

- We believe the government needs to provide start-up funding, and at least initially the core operating budget of approximately \$500,000 per annum.
- Government need also consider how to support the viability of the range of civil-society participants in this multistakeholder community, to ensure that balanced participation is possible in the long-term.
- Government need also consider how the Entity may refer to other funding pools for specific outputs.
- Government plays an important role in endorsing this body, and providing seed resourcing to encourage other contributions and leadership from the multistakeholder set of participants.

26. *What challenges do you foresee would need to be overcome?*

- Trust in the Entity from civil society, particularly if intelligence, security or law enforcement is envisaged as playing a large role.
- Trust from the Community to interventions to make a contribution to the disinformation environment. A large part of the disinformation challenge is a lack of trust in traditional government and media information. The Entity must acknowledge and respect the trust of the wider New Zealand public as something to protect and nurture to be able to address the challenge of disinformation.
- The inherent security threats and challenges in working on disinformation, and how that may threaten the organisations and

individuals that participate in the Entity. The appropriate links to government entities such as The Police to protect participants from threats and harms is unfortunately likely to be required.

- The long-term un-viability of some of the civil society participants, as discussed above.

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From: s 9(2)(a)
To: s 9(2)(g)(ii) [DPMC]
Cc: s 9(2)(g)(ii) [DPMC]; s 9(2)(a)
Subject: Re: Pitch-back: InternetNZ on the Multistakeholder disinformation entity
Date: Tuesday, 1 November 2022 2:55:10 pm

s 9(2)(g)(ii),

Gnash, that's one of those last minute edits that threw the numbering out. Yes, where Para 8 is referred to it should be Para 9.

I can edit that and replace it for you if it's useful.

Thanks for spotting my error.

s 9(2)(a)

On Tue, 1 Nov 2022 at 11:39, s 9(2)(g)(ii) wrote:
@dpmc.govt.nz

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Thanks you s 9(2)(a), from a quick read through it looks very useful and I appreciate the time you've taken to develop this. I'll take the time to absorb this properly, and will circle back with you with any further questions.

Can I check though, re para 24 and its reference to 'We have outlined which parties we see being involved in section 8 of this document', can you please clarify which part of the document is section 8? Is this the bodies listed in the list under para 9? Just want to check I'm not missing something.

Thanks again,

s 9(2)(g)(ii)

From: s 9(2)(a) @internetnz.net.nz
Sent: Monday, 31 October 2022 4:28 pm
To: s 9(2)(g)(ii) @dpmc.govt.nz
Cc: s 9(2)(g)(ii) @dpmc.govt.nz; s 9(2)(a) @internetnz.net.nz
Subject: Pitch-back: InternetNZ on the Multistakeholder disinformation entity

Kia ora s 9(2)(g)(ii)

As committed, please find attached our thoughts in response to the proposal you shared earlier from DPMC, and our discussion in late September.

I emphasise that this is a draft for the purposes of furthering our discussions as required.

We would be very happy to continue this conversation with you if it is useful to do so.

Ngā mihi,

s 9(2)(a)

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s 9(2)(a)

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From: s 9(2)(a)
To: s 9(2)(g)(ii) [DPMC]
Subject: InternetNZ "pitch back"
Date: Friday, 14 October 2022 3:46:20 pm

s 9(2)(g)

I owe you an update on InternetNZ's pitch back on the disinformation, non-government entity proposal we discussed a few weeks ago.

Out of Scope [redacted] I have Out of Scope [redacted] far more time on my hands to finish the pitch back I committed to.

I intend to get this to you by the end of the month. I hope that timeframe works?

Thank you,

s 9(2)(a)

[redacted]

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