DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA

7 August 2026

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0041

[redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted],

Official Information Act request for modelling used in the September 2021 Cabinet Paper *COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand*

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 14 July 2026. You requested:

> *"1. Clarification on the statement in DPMC's previous OIA response that the TPM modelling informing the Cabinet paper, "COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand" (CAB-21-MIN-0393, considered 27 September 2021), was the 30 June 2021 paper "A COVID-19 Vaccination Model for Aotearoa New Zealand". How does this reconcile with the specific numerical table - the Reff values used - in the Cabinet paper [paragraphs 34–40 (or 32–40)] which exactly matches the 23 September 2021 report ["Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand" by Nicholas Steyn, Michael Plank, and Shaun Hendy] and does not match the June paper?*
>
> *2. Was the 23 September 2021 report "Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand" by Nicholas Steyn, Michael Plank, and Shaun Hendy (the one containing the table with the Reff values used in the Cabinet paper's table) provided to or used in the preparation of this Cabinet paper?*
>
> *3. If not, what was the source of those particular Reff numbers, coverage scenarios, and outbreak probability statements in those paragraphs?*
>
> *4. Any records, briefings, emails, or correspondence between DPMC (or other agencies) and the authors of the September 2021 modelling report, or Te Pūnaha Matatini, regarding the use or inclusion of that report (or its Table 2) in that Cabinet paper.*
>
> *5. Any internal notes, minutes, or advice explaining why the September 2021 report was (or was not) treated as one of your "formal briefings or reports"*

Part 1: Clarification of previous response (OIA-2025/26-0804)

Part 1 of your request is not a request for official information for the purposes of sections 2 and 12 of the Act. As noted in DPMC's letter to you on 1 July 2026 (OIA-2025/26-0804 refers), modelling from Te Pūnaha Matatini (TPM), the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) and international examples were considered when preparing the Cabinet paper, *COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand* (CAB-21-MIN-0393).

Following the partial transfer of your previous request to DPMC by the University of Auckland (UoA), DPMC interpreted your request as asking what papers, apart from the 2021 report *Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand,* were

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considered when preparing Cabinet paper *COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand.*

Parts 2 and 3: TPM modelling used for CAB-21-MIN-0393

Yes, the TPM modelling used for this paper included both the 23 September 2021 report entitled *Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand* and the 30 June 2021 paper titled *A COVID-19 Vaccination Model for Aotearoa New Zealand*. These documents are both publicly available and links to both documents were provided in our previous letter (OIA-2025/26-0804 refers).

Part 4: Records, briefings, emails, or correspondence with modellers

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic generated a significant volume of work that was happening at pace. This was particularly the case during the early days of the pandemic response. DPMC led the coordination of the all-of-government response to COVID-19, and we hold a large volume of correspondence, emails, and documents, many of which were authored by other agencies and include various draft versions of documents. To be able to identify all of the correspondence, emails, and documents that may include some information relevant to your request would require substantial collation and research and therefore it is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

I have considered whether consulting you may enable a reframing of this query such that the reason for refusal is alleviated; however, I did not identify any amendment that would enable us to readily respond. I have also considered extending the timeframe for response and/or fixing a charge and determined that neither option would enable a response or remove the reason for refusal.

Part 5: Inclusion of September 2021 report in previous response (OIA-2025/26-0804)

As noted in response to part one of your request, DPMC interpreted your previous request to be asking what papers, apart from the 2021 report *Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand,* were considered when preparing Cabinet paper *COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand.*

I have decided to release parts of the cover sheet, which is an administrative decision document linked to your request. Only the parts that explain the decision around which reports to include are within scope of your request. Parts of the document that are not within scope of your request have not been considered for release under the Act and are marked accordingly.

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 DPMC 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



Alan Cassidy
Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate

Departmental OIA request coversheet

To	***Manager, Accountability and Ministerial Services***	Jenna Hansen
From	***DPMC Ministerial Services Contact***	[Not in Scope] Advisor, Ministerial Services

OIA number:	OIA-2025/26-0804	
Requestor:	***Name***	
	Organisation / Business	None
Due to requestor:	7 July 2026	

[Not in Scope]

Consulted with	
• Internal	Policy Advisory Group – [Not in Scope] (PAG Advisor) Corporate – [Not in Scope] (Advisor) Ministerial Services • [Not in Scope] (Senior Advisor) • [Not in Scope] (Senior Advisor)
• External	University of Auckland (UoA) – [Not in Scope] (Legal Advisor)
• Minister's Office (if applicable)	Not applicable.

Comments on draft reply:

- This is part four of an OIA request made to UoA. The requester is seeking the document used to inform the Cabinet paper *COVID-19: A Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand* (CAB-21-MIN-0393) from September 2021.
- Following consultation with the University of Auckland (UoA), I have interpreted "this one" as referring to the publicly available 2021 report *Modelling to support a future COVID-19 strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand*, which is consistent with UoA's approach.
- I have interpreted "document" to mean final versions of formal briefings, reports, or modelling that informed the Cabinet paper, rather than drafts or working material. This is consistent with the requestor's ask for "the document" rather than "all material" etc.
- The Cabinet paper identifies modelling from Te Pūnaha Matatini and Environmental Science and Research, alongside relevant international evidence, as informing the development of the strategy. I have found a draft memo sent from DPMC to PMO on 21 September 2021 that identifies these three sources.
- These sources are publicly available, and I have not identified any additional final reports or briefings within scope of the request. A PAG search has been conducted for due diligence and returned no results within scope. The request is therefore refused under section 18(d).

Released under the Official Information Act 1982