

17 July 2020

[REDACTED]

By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202003817

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), refined on June 2 2020 for:

- "1. Between March 24 and April 3, all official information received by Dr Ashley Bloomfield in relation to the domestic supply and distribution of PPE.*
- 2. Between April 6 and April 10, all emails received by Dr Ashley Bloomfield that relate to PPE.*
- 3. Between March 24 and April 3, all official information held by the Ministry in relation to PPE supply from QSI's Whanganui factory.*
- 4. Between March 24 and April 3, all official information held by the Ministry in relation to problems, issues or concerns about the management and the distribution of PPE at District Health Boards."*

On 30 June 2020, the time for responding to your request was extended pursuant to section 15A of the Act.

In response to part one of your request, we considered official information to include documents including reports, briefings and memos. The search for this information resulted in a large volume of information (hundreds of documents) and would require significant research and collation. As such, your request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

To respond to part two of your request, would require a significant amount of collation. For context, a search for this information yielded over 600 emails relating to PPE during this time period. As such your, request for this information is refused under section 18(f) of the Act.

In response to part three of your request, the Ministry holds information regarding the placement of orders for mask manufacture between 24 March 2020 and 3 April 2020. However, as this information is deemed commercially sensitive, this information is withheld in full under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act, as releasing this information would be likely to unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

In response to part four of your request, one document has been found within the scope of your request. Appendix One details the Ministry's decision on release for this document and a copy of the document is enclosed.

I trust this information fulfils your request. You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made in response to your request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, overlapping loops and curves, positioned above the printed name.

Natalie Richardson
Director
COVID-19 Response

Appendix One: Documents for release

#	Date	Title	Decision on release
1	30 March 2020	Fact Sheets and Key Messages for Epidemic Response Committee hearing – Tuesday 31 March 2020-Excerpt	Excerpt released under section 16(1)(e) of the Act.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Summary

Overview: In addition to regular operating supplies of PPE items, there is a national reserve of PPE for cases of prolonged emergencies. The reserve is located both within DHBs and the Ministry of Health.

Key message: It is important our health and disability workforce and those working in essential services are protected. We have sufficient PPE stocks in this reserve to supply the country's health and disability workforce, and other essential workers, for some time.

- There is good stock of all PPE gear in the country right now and we are strengthening the process for ensuring it gets to the right places. We were also prepared. The Ministry of Health has good stock in the national reserves and DHBs also have their own reserves for when we need it.
- There is also ongoing work to ensure:
 - Appropriate PPE use is understood and applied by all people who need it, including health professionals and other essential workers
 - stocks are used appropriately.
- The Ministry has issued updated guidance to DHBs on appropriate clinical use of PPE.
- Supply chains continue to provide PPE as needed, including assisting a Whanganui-based producer by supporting distribution so they can stay focused on production.
- the Ministry is exploring all existing and a range of new avenues to ensure we maintain stocks.

Operational Stocktake

- DHBs and other healthcare providers have regular operational stocks of PPE and other equipment that they purchase and use for daily use which is separate to the National Reserve.
- The Ministry of Health is working to fully understand what DHBs currently have in their regular operational stocks of PPE and how quickly that stock is being used.
- The stock in the National Reserve as at 27 March 2020 is:

PPE Item	National Reserve	
	DHB Reserves	MOH Reserves
Masks	5.1 million	18 million
Coverage (gowns/aprons)	1.8 million	
Gloves	2.4 million	
Surgical handwash/sanitiser	21,000 bottles	
Face shield/eye protection	60,000 items	

Ongoing Supply

- To ensure ongoing supply of masks 640,00 were released from the Ministry to DHBs with low reserve stock on 26 March.
- There are plans through **April** to release a further:
 - 4 million masks to the health sector
 - 4 million masks to non-health sector essential workers.
- Further supplies will be released in May
- A priority list is being compiled to ensure essential workers at most risk receive masks and any other PPE required first.

Disability, Aged Care and Home Care Workers

- PPE should be prioritised for those health professionals providing direct patient care, including frontline staff (primary and secondary care) and emergency services.
- Measures to address immediate needs, which include a limited urgent release of equipment and accompanying guidance, will be announced within 24 hours.
 - These measures are in addition to a longer-term solution which is also being worked through.

- The safety of staff is a top priority as we work through this fast-evolving and challenging time.

Information considered to be out of scope

Released under the Official Information Act 1982