

30 May 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202206064

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

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) on 10 May 2022. You requested:

“Can you tell me how many exemption applications you have turned down for the import of Covid-19 point of care RAT and Lamp tests (molecular tests), broken down by month, since Nov 1, 2021? For clarity, I’m asking for the number of individuals or entities that sought exemptions to import Covid-19 tests, where those tests did not have approval for use in NZ by the MoH at the time.

Can you also provide me with the number of exemptions that were approved for the import of Covid-19 point of care RAT and Lamp tests, broken down by month, since Nov 1, 2021? For clarity, I’m asking for the number of instances when the MoH granted an exemption for the import of Covid-19 tests that were not approved for use in NZ by the MoH.

Where exemptions were given, is it possible to identify the instances where they relate to import by a government entity (including for the purpose assessing the tests for approval by the MoH and verifying the tests’ claims)?”

The number of applications that have been declined for the import of COVID-19 point of care rapid antigen tests *(RAT) since November 1, 2021 are outlined in the table below:

Month Received	Applications Declined
Nov-21	27
Dec-21	10
Jan-22	36
Feb-22	80
Mar-22	42
Apr-22	8
TOTAL	203

To date, only two authorisations have been granted for the use of LAMP tests in New Zealand. The first is for use in an Air New Zealand pilot programme and the second for use in laboratories.

RAT tests are authorised for import and used in New Zealand when an exemption has been granted by the Director-General of Health. A list of authorised RAT tests is on the Ministry’s website: www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-testing/rapid-antigen-testing-rat#regulatory. Since November 1, 2021 no tests have been

sourced by the Ministry or government entity for assessing. All authorisations for point-of-care tests are also gazetted, www.gazette.govt.nz.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Jo Pugh
**Acting Group Manager, Testing and Supply
COVID-19 Health System Response**