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26 July 2024

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2024044128

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) transferred from Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 11 June 2024 for information regarding the Vaccine Ministers. Please find a response to each part of your request below.

Question 1: When were the ‘Vaccine Ministers’ established and disestablished? They are mentioned in a 12 August 2022 Cabinet Paper; see [www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/20221239_covid-19_vaccine_portfolio_update - transfer and donation 0.pdf](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/20221239_covid-19_vaccine_portfolio_update_-_transfer_and_donation_0.pdf).

Question 2: Please advise the names of the Vaccines Ministers, and their Chair (if there was one), and the length of time they operated as Vaccine Ministers (e.g. some may have changed over time).

Question 3: How did the role of Vaccine Minister come about and how did it operate in practice? Was this like a subcommittee of Cabinet Ministers (please explain)? Was there a terms of reference? (if yes, please provide)? Who provided advice to the Vaccine Ministers? For example, did this advice come from Pharmac and/or a vaccination advisory group of some sort, etc). Please explain and list advisors.

A Vaccine Ministerial group first met in December 2020 to discuss and help govern the management of New Zealand’s portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines, including the immunisation programme rollout. This was initially an informal group which met initially weekly to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine and immunisation programme, including associated reporting provided by the Ministry’s COVID-19 Vaccine Immunisation Programme (CVIP). The Ministry does not hold information on when this group finished meeting.

This group consisted of the below Ministers and with the Minister of COVID-19 Response as the ongoing Chair.

- Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response
- Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister
- Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance
- Hon Andrew Little, Minister of Health
- Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Associate Minister of Health
- Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Health
- Hon Peeni Henare, Associate Minister of Health

As an informal group, there were no Terms of Reference. Meetings were focused on driving, monitoring, and managing vaccine purchasing and the subsequent immunisation rollout. Further information on the immunisation programme is available at: oag.parliament.nz/2021/vaccines/part4.htm.

Cabinet delegated Vaccine Ministers decision-making authority on certain aspects of the COVID-19 Immunisation Programme. This was to ensure timely decision making could be made on the COVID-19 Immunisation programme including purchasing decisions, managing supply changes and donations. We note the decisions related to the use of vaccines remained with Cabinet.

Vaccine Ministers received advice from the relevant advisory body or agency, depending on the topic. Advice that required decisions from Ministers were provided in briefings which have been proactively released on the Ministry website: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases.

Question 4: What was the date the 'COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and portfolio management' was transferred to the Vaccine Ministers? We note that the Cabinet paper above stated that on 1 July 2022, the COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and portfolio management transferred to Pharmac? Can you provide the date it was transferred from Pharmac to the Vaccine Ministers? And/or was this responsibility with another party that was then transferred to the Vaccine Cabinet Ministers?

There has been no transfer of COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and portfolio management from or to Ministers. The vaccine purchasing and portfolio management transferred in CAB-22-MIN-189, refers to purchasing and portfolio management functions managed by the Ministry, which was agreed to be transferred to Pharmac on 1 July 2022.

Question 5: Attached Excel spreadsheet of vaccine information within the public arena. We have a few gaps we are hoping you might be able to compare against your records and provide answers.

We are unable to provide the requested information in the format requested for COVID-19 vaccines. We note vaccine purchasing agreements outlined options to access adult doses and paediatric doses rather than specific formulations. Updated formulations including boosters were provided as they became available from the supplier and within the existing volumes of our agreements. Appendix 1 outlines when agreements were signed and the number of doses.

*Question 13: Who made the decision not to include the stock of COVID-19 vaccines in the National Reserve Supply (NRS)? And why?
FYI; the stock of H5N1 vaccines are currently included in the composition of the NRS.*

The COVID-19 vaccines were not included in the NRS because, once vaccines were available, they formed part of the ongoing response to the pandemic. The NRS contains items to enable the health system to respond to an unknown large or prolonged emergency.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maree Roberts'.

Maree Roberts
Deputy Director-General
Strategy Policy and Legislation | Te Pou Rautaki

Appendix 1: Vaccine supplier date agreement signed (and number of doses)

	Date	Doses total	Adult doses	Paediatric doses
Pfizer	22-Dec-20	1,500,525	1,500,525	-
	5-Mar-21	8,500,635	8,500,635	
	12-May-21	100,620	100,620	
	7-Sep-21	274,950	274,950	
	10-Sep-21	500,760	500,760	
	22-Oct-21	4,701,060	3,447,060	1,254,000
	28-Jun-22	3,000,000	2,500,000	500,000
Janssen	22-Dec-20	2,000,000		
Novavax	15-Dec-20	10,720,000		
AstraZeneca	15-Dec-20	7,600,000		