

21 January 2021

[REDACTED]
By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202008777

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 4 December 2020 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for:

“Please supply the information used as a basis for the decision to use a Level 4 lockdown to stop transmission of Covid-19 in early 2020, including:

- 1) The information on the risks to the health of the NZ population from Covid-19 (if transmission were not controlled) that formed the basis for this decision.*
- 2) The information on the risks to the health of the NZ population from the Level 4 lockdown’s disruption to health services, normal functioning of the economy etc. that was considered when making the decision to initiate the lockdown.”*

The decision to adopt the Alert Levels and impose nationwide controls to manage the COVID-19 pandemic was made by Cabinet on the advice of the Director-General of Health. The Alert Levels and nationwide controls were established to break the chains of transmission and avoid an exponential rise in cases, as well as reduce the potential impacts on the health system for those with more severe disease.

Cabinet advice is publicly available on the ‘Unite Against COVID-19’ webpage where various papers have been proactively released. This can be found on the following link: <https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/legislation-and-key-documents/proactive-release/health-response/>

The Ministry also commissioned modelling reports regarding the health outcomes and impacts on New Zealand of COVID-19. The modelling helped inform Government decisions on when, how much, and for how-long the country can ease the lockdown and other measures. This can be found on the following link: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/covid-19-modelling-and-other-commissioned-reports>

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Kelly".

Jane Kelley
Group Manager, COVID-19 Strategic Operations
COVID-19 Health System Response