

21 December 2021

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202114706

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 14 October 2021. On 20 October 2021, you were contacted by the Ministry to refine your request as it was currently worded, was for a very large volume of information. You agreed to refine your request on 26 October 2021. I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

- 1. All briefings provided to Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins on COVID-19 home isolation.*
- 8. All briefings regarding Auckland's revised alert level three guidelines which came into force on October 5 and involves a three-tier approach to the alert level.*
- 10. All briefings provided by the Ministry of Health so far regarding the vaccine certificate/passport to be used in New Zealand.*

As you were advised on 23 November 2021, due to the volume of information in scope of your request, the Ministry has decided to satisfy your request through a staged release in order to avoid further delays to you receiving this information. These parts of your request will be released in the second tranche which we will endeavour to provide to you as soon as reasonably practicable.

- 2. Copies of all IPSOS surveys which I understand have been done weekly since early May 2021 to help the Ministry understand the level of vaccine acceptance in the community, identify possible barriers to vaccination, and how uptake could be encouraged.*

Information within scope of this part of your request is itemised in Appendix 1 of this letter and copies of the documents are enclosed. The table in Appendix 1 outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld, this is noted in the document itself.

- 3. All memos and briefings to Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins and/or Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield regarding alert level restriction compliance by Kiwis and its impact on virus spread during the Delta outbreak which began in August, 2021.*

No memos or briefings have been identified in scope of this part of your request, therefore it is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist. I have been advised that information on compliance may be mentioned in the Public Health Risk Assessments. However, as each assessment would have to be individually reviewed to identify

whether there is any information in scope of your request, these are refused under section 18(f) as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

You may be interested in the compliance updates published by the New Zealand Police, available at: www.police.govt.nz/search-results/compliance.

You may also be interested in the following proactively released paper, which mentions compliance with regards to alert level decisions: www.covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Health-response/26-November-2021/20212136-Delta-Outbreak-2021-Review-of-Alert-Level-Settings-September-30.pdf.

4. *All memos and briefings compiled for Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins and Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield regarding the source of the Delta outbreak which became known in New Zealand in mid-August, 2021.*

Information within scope of this part of your request is itemised in Appendix 2 of this letter and copies of the documents are enclosed. The table in Appendix 2 outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld, this is noted in the document itself.

Please note that the exact chain of transmission from the source case to the community remains unknown.

5. *All reviews undertaken by the Ministry of Health into exemptions submitted by New Zealanders to attend tangihanga or funerals. Our intention is not to identify the people who have submitted the exemptions but to analyse the review process.*

When an applicant requests a review of their exemption application for a tangihanga or funeral, they are required to reference the original exemption application in the body of the review application. This means that there is no uniform way to search or collate review applications as they display as unlinked, standalone applications. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. Please note that the Ministry is working on refining the review process to include a review within the original application.

The Ministry can, however, provide you with information on the review process. The Ministry's Operational Policy for health order exemptions is as follows:

Reviews and reapplications

If an applicant does not agree with the Ministry's decision to decline their application for an exemption, they can request a review by applying for a reassessment through the decline notification they would have received by email. Reassessments must be assessed by a different assessor to that of the original application.

If the final decision on a reassessment is to decline the application and the applicant disagrees with the decision, they can submit a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Further reapplications

When both a person's initial application and reapplications are declined, any further applications they submit for the same travel reason will be declined without an assessment or decision-makers sign-off (unless there is new information provided). This is the agreed process because after two assessments, the outcome will not change based on the number of times a person applies. The process for dispute past this point is to submit a complaint to the Ombudsman.

The formal decline letter applicants receive advises them to submit a complaint to the Ombudsman if, after two declines, they still believe their application for a travel exemption should have been approved.

As part of this request, can you also include how many exemptions have been submitted in total and how many have been approved/denied, as well as how many denied exemptions have been reviewed on request and how many of those have been approved/denied.

As of 15 December 2021, a total of 35,761 inter-regional travel exemption applications have been processed.

Total complete	Approved	Declined	Other
35,761	11,176	15,615	8,970

** The other category includes applications which have been closed, referred to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, did not require an exemption, or have been declined multiple times.*

Information regarding reassessments prior to 28 October 2021 cannot be provided due to system reporting limitations. Improvements to the review system were implemented on 28 October 2021. From this date, 284 declined applications have been reviewed on request. Of these, 38 were subsequently overturned and approved (this may be because additional information has been provided with the reassessment request), and 246 were declined a second time.

- 6. All memos and briefings compiled for Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins and/or Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield regarding the two Covid-positive women who travelled through Northland in early October, their movements in the region and their potential risk to the region.*

Information within scope of this part of your request is itemised in Appendix 3 of this letter and copies of the documents are enclosed. The table in Appendix 3 outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld, this is noted in the document itself.

- 7. All reports made by public health units across the country which were supplied to the Ministry of Health as part of forming advice to Cabinet ahead of alert level decisions during the Delta outbreak which began in August, 2021.*

While information may have been drawn from district health board (DHB) or public health unit (PHU) situation reports for advice provided to the Minister for COVID-19 Response, the PHUs did not specifically provide the Ministry with reports for the purpose of forming advice to the Minister or Cabinet. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

Please note that the advice the Ministry provided to the Minister for COVID-19 Response regarding alert level decisions during the Delta outbreak is scheduled to be published at: www.covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/proactive-releases/. These documents contain any information drawn from DHB and PHU situation reports.

You may wish to request the daily situation reports directly from the DHBs. You can find their websites at: www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/district-health-boards/district-health-board-websites.

9. The weekly vaccination production plans for all DHBs between October and December. This is an extension of the same request made by the Herald in September for the productions plans for September.

From July to October 2021, DHBs developed production plans that provided estimates of vaccine delivery to eligible populations on a weekly basis. These production plans were based on census-based population modelling for each DHB and considered eligibility based on staged access to the vaccine for age cohorts 18 and above. The production planning cycles helped the DHBs understand how they would scale up workforce and site configurations to meet the peak volumes for their populations based on their age cohorts.

The focus of the October to December phases has been on demonstrating sufficient capacity within each DHB to service 100% of the remaining unvaccinated population aged 12 and above. The capacity planning phase provides weekly volumes of available capacity across each DHB using health services user (HSU) data to enable an improved breakdown by equity/ethnicity to support planning activity. For each DHB, their weekly planned capacity volumes were developed in conjunction with planned outreach campaigns (demand) and site model plans (supply) to enable vaccine delivery.

In summary, whereas the production plan phases were concentrated on planning for volumes and delivery based on age cohorts, the capacity planning phase has focused on meeting an assumed demand of 100% of the remaining unvaccinated population.

This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Act,. The capacity plans are proposed to be published later this year.

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



Dom Harris
**Manager, Office of the Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Health System Response**

Appendix 1: Copies of IPSOS vaccine tracker surveys

#	Date	Title	Decision on release
1	28 April 2021 – 3 May 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 1	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.
2	4 May 2021 – 9 May 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 2	
3	10 May 2021 – 17 May 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 3	
4	18 May 2021 – 23 May 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 4	
5	24 May 2021 – 30 May 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 5	
6	31 May 2021 – 6 June 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 6	
7	7 June 2021 – 13 June 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 7	
8	14 June 2021 – 20 June 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 8	
9	21 June 2021 – 27 June 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 9	
10	28 June 2021 – 4 July 2021	Covid Vaccine Tracker, Wave 10	

Appendix 2: Memos and briefings regarding the source of the August 2021 Delta outbreak

#	Date	Title	Decision on release
1	19 August 2021	Memo: Update on Source Investigation Auckland August Cluster 2021	Released in full.
2	20 August 2021	Source Investigation: Auckland August Cluster 2021	
3	21 August 2021	Source Investigation: Auckland August Cluster 2021	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.
4	23 August 2021	Source Investigation: Auckland August Cluster 2021	
5	24 August 2021	Source Investigation: Auckland August Cluster 2021	
6	25 August 2021	Source Investigation Update: Auckland August Cluster 2021	Released in full.
7	1 September 2021	Source Investigation Final Report: Auckland August Cluster 2021	

Appendix 3: Memos and briefings regarding the two Covid-positive women who travelled through Northland in early October, their movements in the region and their potential risk to the region

#	Date	Title	Decision on release
1	11 October 2021	Memo: Public health advice on Alert Level settings for Waikato (Hamilton/Raglan) and Northland	Withheld in full under section 18(d) as the information requested is publicly available at www.covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Health-response/26-November-2021/Public-health-advice-on-Alert-Level-settings-for-Waikato-HamiltonRaglan-and-Northland-11-October-2021.pdf .
2	13 October 2021	Memo: Talking points: Alert Level settings for Waikato and Northland	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act and deemed out of scope of the request.