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6 June 2023

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2023024384

Tēnā koe s 9(2)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 28 April 2023 for information regarding a COVID-19 prevalence survey.

On 9 May 2023, Manatū Hauora contacted you in accordance with section 18B of the Act, as your request, as it was worded, was for a very large volume of information. We suggested that you limit your request to official correspondence within a more specific timeframe.

On the same day, you responded and agreed to refine your request to official memos, reports and briefings concerning the topics you identified, between 28 April 2022 and 28 April 2023.

Please find a response to each part of your request below:

- *Details of the information the former Director General of Health relied on when making these comments.*
- *Correspondence and briefings to the Director General of Health, or their office, regarding the Covid-19 prevalence survey. Included but not limited to its initial proposal, planning, execution and cancellation.*
- *Correspondence and briefings to the Minister of Health, or their office, regarding the Covid-19 prevalence survey. Included but not limited to its initial proposal, planning, execution and cancellation.*
- *Correspondence and briefings to the Minister for Covid-19 response, or their office, regarding the Covid-19 prevalence survey. Included but not limited to its initial proposal, planning, execution and cancellation.*
- *The rationale and advice regarding the cancellation of the study.*
- *Any communications regarding the ongoing delays to the study.*

Manatū Hauora has identified four documents within scope of this part of your request. All documents are itemised in Appendix 1 and copies of the documents are enclosed. Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in releasing information and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

- The costs included by the Ministry of Health in preparing this study, included but not limited to internal costs and costs on contractors and consultants etc

There are two key cost types incurred in the COVID-19 prevalence surveys project since January 2022 – the cost for project personnel (delivery and oversight), and costs relating to exploration of a data and digital capability, by which surveys might be delivered to participants. The cost for project personnel has not been determined. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as the information requested is not held. The incurred cost for the data & digital build and capability is \$197,000 (GST exclusive).

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

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrew Old
Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui

Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
1	31 October 2022	Memo – Priority Population Survey – Selection of Priority Population.	Released in full.
2	11 November 2022	Briefing – Update on COVID-19 Infection Prevalence and Seroprevalence Surveys.	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.
3	20 December 2022	Memo – Setting the future direction for the Prevalence Surveys	Released in full.
4	17 February 2023	Briefing – Setting the Future Direction of the Prevalence Surveys	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.