



30 June 2023

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2023026387

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 Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 1 June 2023 for information regarding Aotearoa New Zealand's membership to the World Health Organization (WHO). You requested:

*“Can New Zealand's membership to the world health organization be revoked?
Can New Zealanders take control of their own health and not be apart of the WHO or the United Nations?
Can New Zealand citizens initiate a citizen Referenda to remove ourselves from the world health organization? and the United Nations.
Who is responsible for pulling us out of the world health organization?”*

The WHO is the specialised health agency of the United Nations system. The WHO's work programme and operations are governed by the 194 Member States, of whom Aotearoa New Zealand is a founding member.

Aotearoa New Zealand engages in WHO processes at national, regional, and global levels in support of the WHO's core mandate. This includes advocating for universal health coverage, preparing for and responding to health emergencies, and promoting healthier lives. The WHO aims to “promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable.” More information on the WHO's functions and goals can be found here: www.who.int/about/what-we-do.

You have asked about the roles and responsibilities involved with membership of the WHO and the United Nations. Aotearoa New Zealand's relationship with the WHO and United Nations is managed by the Aotearoa New Zealand Government. This relationship is facilitated and guided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (Manatū Aorere) and Manatū Hauora.

Given that the WHO is the lead agency for global health in the United Nations system, Aotearoa New Zealand would not consider exiting the WHO or withdrawing membership from the United Nations. We are committed to supporting its work and see its role in the global health system as critically important.

Membership arrangements for the WHO are covered by the WHO Constitution (or founding treaty). This does not explicitly provide for withdrawal from membership, nor does it contain provision for removing a Member State and its obligations under the Treaty. You can find a copy of the Constitution here: www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf.

If you wish to learn more about citizens-initiated referenda, New Zealand Parliament offers useful information. You can find this information here: www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/features/what-is-a-citizens-initiated-referendum/.

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



Dr Andrew Old
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Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui