



10 September 2021

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0066

Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Act request relating to change of Alert Level 2 definition wording**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 30 July 2021. You requested:

*- All correspondence, reports, briefings and other documents relating to change in definition of Alert Level 2 in late June.*

*For clarity, I am referring to the change in language for the golden rules for businesses from: "All businesses can operate if they can do so safely. Alternative ways of working are encouraged where possible." to "All businesses can operate if they can do so safely."*

*This change in language occurred on the Covid19.govt.nz website, run by DPMC.*

*- All correspondence, reports, briefings and other documents relating to the effects of work from home policies and guidelines on Wellington hospitality venues, since March 1, 2020*

I have interpreted your request as seeking documents and or records that informed the decision to update the Alert Level 2 page on the Unite Against COVID-19 in late June 2021, ([covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/alert-level-2/](https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/alert-level-2/)), including any correspondence relating to work from home policies and guidelines for Wellington hospitality venues, since 1 March 2020, that may have informed this decision. Please advise if this interpretation is incorrect.

The golden rules for business on the Unite Against COVID-19 website provides a high level summary of the key points businesses are encouraged to consider at Alert Level 2. One of these golden rules is to encourage businesses to make a decision on how to operate safely, i.e. 'All businesses can operate if they can do so safely'.

Encouraging businesses to consider alternative ways of working is one way businesses can maintain safety in the workplace. As you note, the golden rules summary was updated in late June 2021, in such a way that it did not include this further detail. However, the Alert Level system tables on the Unite Against COVID-19 website continued to include this information, and therefore, did not indicate a change in policy, and was simply a tweak to the golden rules summary made by our web team, who are continuously seek to make the text on the Unite Against COVID-19 website as clear, and helpful as possible.

I note that since your request, the Alert Level system tables have since been updated to account for the new restrictions resulting from Delta, and that 'alternative ways of working are still encouraged' is still included in these updated tables.

No further documents or records have been identified as relating to this change being made.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Barnes  
**Deputy Chief Executive,  
COVID-19 Response**