



10 February 2022



Ref: OIA-2021/22-0673

Dear Thomas Harvey

Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 death projections under the COVID-19 Protection Framework

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 22 November 2021. You requested:

"I request all information held by DPMC regarding projections for Covid-related deaths in New Zealand following the implementation of the Covid-19 Protection Framework.

I also request all information held by DPMC regarding the decision that the Covid-19 Protection Framework will come into effect in Auckland regardless of whether vaccination targets have been met across the region's DHB areas."

Initially, your request was transferred in full to the Ministry of Health. Following further consideration however, on 25 January 2022, the second part of your request regarding the decision to implement the COVID-19 Protection Framework (the Traffic Lights system) regardless of vaccination rates, was transferred back to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) for response.

On 18 October 2021, Cabinet agreed in principle that Auckland would move to the Traffic Lights system when each Auckland District Health Board (DHB) had reached 90% full vaccination of those eligible. It was also signalled that Cabinet would be pragmatic about their decision and not necessarily wait until all three DHBs are over 90%.

In early December, full vaccination rates were projected to be 86% for Counties Manukau, 89% for Waitematā, and 92% for Auckland. All three Auckland DHBs were on track to reach 90% full vaccination of their eligible populations in mid-December.

On 22 November 2021 Cabinet, in light of up to date information, reconsidered its prior decision that each DHB reach 90 percent full vaccination of their eligible population before transitioning to the Traffic Lights system. Instead it agreed in principle, subject to further health assessments, that the entire country transition to the Traffic Lights system at 11.59pm, Thursday, 2 December 2021.

This approach was tested by Ministers with the Government's COVID-19 Advisory Group chairs who recognised the imperatives for shifting the country into the Traffic Lights system before Christmas, including the importance of continued incentives for vaccination, reducing the degree of spread, maintaining public health measures, ensuring the health system has capacity, and that resources are in the right places to support communities.

Further information regarding the transition to the Traffic Lights system has been proactively released and can be found on the Unite Against COVID-19 website through the following links:

covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Alert-levels-and-restrictions/10-December-2021/Vaccine-Certificates-and-CPF/COVID-19-Transition-to-the-COVID-19-Protection-Framework-and-the-Auckland-Alert-Level-Boundary.pdf

covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Alert-levels-and-restrictions/10-December-2021/Vaccine-Certificates-and-CPF/COVID-19-Implementing-the-COVID-19-Protection-Framework.pdf

covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Alert-levels-and-restrictions/10-December-2021/Vaccine-Certificates-and-CPF/Review-of-COVID-19-Protection-Framework-Settings-for-New-Zealand.pdf

I am therefore refusing your request under section 18(d) as the information requested is publicly available through the links above.

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 Group