



10 March 2022

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0404

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 marketing budget and spending

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 7 October 2021. You requested:

“information regarding the marketing budget for the Unite Against Covid 19 campaign (inclusive of vaccination promotion if that is a separate budget). I would like to know:

- 1) what the marketing spend to date has been*
- 2) a breakdown of marketing expenditure by channel or medium (eg. TV, radio, print ads, social media)*
- 3) If social media influencers have been employed as part of the Covid 19 vaccination campaign and, if possible, a list of those employed for this purpose.”*

On 5 November 2021, the limits for making a decision on your request were extended by an additional 20 working days to allow for consultations on your request. On 1 December 2021, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) contacted you to advise that due to its involvement in the government response to COVID-19, our timelines to respond to requests have been impacted. I apologise for the delay and am now in a position to respond.

We have interpreted your request to be for the costs for the Unite Against COVID-19 Campaign and the Vaccine Campaign, held by DPMC.

Regarding part one of your request, a total of \$92,624,096 has been spent by DPMC on public information campaigns in support of New Zealand’s COVID-19 response between 1 March 2020 and 31 January 2022. Please note that this includes funding for COVID-19 public information campaigns run by the National Crisis Management Centre before the COVID-19 Group was established within DPMC on 31 June 2020. This figure includes \$32,468,008 for costs of the Vaccine Campaign. These figures include costs for creative, advertising, video and script production, website maintenance, translation services, printing, and other associated costs.

We closely monitor this expenditure to ensure it is targeted to be as effective as possible and consistent with the changing needs and management of New Zealand’s COVID-19 response. The vaccine public information campaign is developed and funded by the Ministry of Health, working in partnership with DPMC to ensure a complementary and holistic approach to campaign activity. DPMC administers the Vaccine Campaign budget.

These campaigns are targeted to reach all people in New Zealand, communicating vital information including COVID Protection Framework (Traffic Light) and policy setting changes and the actions required by New Zealanders, as well as encouraging key public health behaviours.

New Zealand's communication approach has been internationally recognised, and it is acknowledged as one of the pillars of the country's successful COVID-19 response. There has been a focus on ensuring the public receive clear information through key channels to guide them through the different phases of the pandemic, taking the actions required at given time. In 2021, this included a comprehensive, multifaceted campaign to support the COVID-19 Vaccine rollout, ensuring communities across Aotearoa were well informed about the vaccine and motivated to protect themselves, their whānau, and community.

Regarding part two of your request for a breakdown of advertising expenditure by medium, because all media placement is via a contracted media agency, and DPMC does not place requests with media outlets directly, media costs are not broken down by individual media outlets in the DPMC financial system.

I am therefore refusing your request to have this information broken down by medium under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by the department and I do not believe that it is held by another public sector agency.

Regarding the part of the request for the names of the social media influencers used to support the COVID-19 Vaccine campaign. There were 11 content creators who were used to promote the vaccination message as part of the Super Saturday vaccination campaign. These individuals were Louis Davis, Jackie Cheng, Tyla Nathan-Wong, Kirstie Stanway, Nicole Whippy, Aya Al-chalabi, Nicole Goldsworthy, Jared Jackson, Win Velasco, Michael Fergus and Daniel Rhodes. These content creators were engaged to make and share their own authentic vaccine-related content that was relevant to them and their followers.

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 considered for publication 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**