



19 April 2022

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0988

Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 vaccine advertising costs on *The Chase***

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 10 February 2022.

You requested:

*“who is paying for the covid vaccine advertising on TV? I saw one today during The Chase programme. The advert had one of the Chasers asking NZers when they could get the booster shot, the answer being now if your last shot was more than three months ago. How much did that cost? What is their budget?”*

An extensive public information campaign to support New Zealand's fight against COVID-19 – including the highly transmissible Omicron variant – has been a critical part of supporting and informing New Zealanders throughout the pandemic.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and other Government agencies have been continually looking at innovative ways to reach audiences with these important public health messages, and actively using those channels to encourage everyone to be vaccinated to protect themselves, their whānau and tamariki.

This is because vaccination (along with other health measures) is our key defence against COVID-19. This is particularly important as Omicron spreads in our communities.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) can advise that the total expenditure for the COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign to date, as of 31 March 2022, has been NZD \$37,898,938. This figure is made up of costs for 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 of the management of COVID-19.

DPMC is usually unable to provide a breakdown of the budget as all media placements are placed via a contracted media agency, and DPMC does not place requests with media outlets directly. Furthermore, media costs are not broken down in DPMC's financial system.

However, DPMC has been advised that the overall costs for the promotions via *The Chase* were NZD \$45,501, which comprised production costs of NZD \$20,501 and paid media costs on TVNZ's channels of NZD \$25,000. This information was originally released by the MOH as a response to another request.

The MOH further advised that that *The Chase* promotion, which ran for eight days from 10 February, reached more than 1.5 million individual viewers aged 18 years and over, at least once. Overall, it was seen more than 5.4 million times. The promotion was deliberately timed to align with a significant number of New Zealanders becoming eligible when the interval between completing their primary course and the booster dose was reduced from four months (122 days) to three months (93 days) on 4 February to shore up our defences against Omicron. Reducing the interval meant an additional one million New Zealanders were eligible to receive their booster before the end of summer.

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**