



24 August 2022

[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2021/22-1545

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request for copies of documents relating to the COVID-19 interagency disinformation and online harms group

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 27 July 2022. You requested:

“...ONE: The minutes, agenda and action points for all meetings of the COVID 19 interagency disinformation and online harms group held since the beginning of April 2022

TWO: If the standing agenda for this group has gone through any updates since the beginning of April 2022 I would like to request all versions of the standing agenda produced during this period

THREE: If DPMC produced any submissions, presentations or other items that were tabled or presented for 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 3 (“Strategic view of disinformation landscape”) then I would like to request a copies of these documents

FOUR: I would like to request a copy of the “Working Group Terms of Reference” referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 4)

FIVE: I would like to request a copy of the “Landscape Report” Request for Proposal and any other RFX documentation produced for the procurement of this “Landscape Report” (14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 5)

SIX: If the procurement of this “Landscape Report” has been awarded I would like to request the identity of the organisation it was awarded to

SEVEN: If the “Landscape Report” has been completed I would like to request a copy of it

EIGHT: I would like to request a copy of the “Work Plan (6 month goals)” referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 8)

NINE: If any other “Work Plans” for the group have been produced since the one referred to in 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 8, I would like to request copies of all these more recent work plans as well

TEN: I would like to request copies of any submissions, presentations or other items produced by the National Security Group that were tabled or presented for 24 March 2022 alternate agenda item 5c (“Quick fire updates... Disinformation wider landscape (NSG)”)...

I have decided under section 15A of the Act to extend the time limits for deciding on your request by an additional 30 working days. Consequently, the extended due date for your response will be 5 October 2022.

The extension is required because of the consultations needed to make a decision on your request. Despite the extension, a response will be sent to you as soon as possible.

However, I am able to respond to some parts of your request which I will do in turn.

1. The minutes, agenda and action points for all meetings of the COVID 19 interagency disinformation and online harms group held since the beginning of April 2022

As advised in our response dated 26 July 2022, no meeting minutes exist, therefore I am declining this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

I have decided to release the group's agenda for the period April 2022 – July 2022, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals.

I can confirm that action points exist. However, more time is required for necessary consultations to make a decision on this part of your request.

2. If the standing agenda for this group has gone through any updates since the beginning of April 2022 I would like to request all versions of the standing agenda produced during this period

I can confirm that the standing agenda released to you in full has not been updated.

3. If DPMC produced any submissions, presentations or other items that were tabled or presented for 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 3 (“Strategic view of disinformation landscape”) then I would like to request a copies of these documents.

I can confirm that this was an informal oral item, and no documents were tabled or presented. Therefore I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as outlined above.

4. I would like to request a copy of the “Working Group Terms of Reference” referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 4)

As advised in our response dated 18 July 2022, only an early draft terms of reference exist. These are therefore withheld in full under s9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

6. I would like to request a copy of the “Landscape Report” Request for Proposal and any other RFX documentation produced for the procurement of this “Landscape Report” (14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 5)

I can confirm that information exists within scope. However, more time is required for necessary consultations to make a decision on this part of your request.

7. If the “Landscape Report” has been completed I would like to request a copy of it

I can confirm that information exists within scope. However, more time is required for necessary consultations to make a decision on this part of your request.

8. I would like to request a copy of the “Work Plan (6 month goals)” referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 8)

I can confirm that information exists within scope. However, more time is required for necessary consultations to make a decision on this part of your request.

9. If any other “Work Plans” for the group have been produced since the one referred to in 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 8, I would like to request copies of all these more recent work plans as well.

More time is required to determine whether information exists before I can make a decision on this part of your request.

10. I would like to request copies of any submissions, presentations or other items produced by the National Security Group that were tabled or presented for 24 March 2022 alternate agenda item 5c (“Quick fire updates... Disinformation wider landscape (NSG)

This was an informal oral item, and no documents were tabled or presented. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as outlined above

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

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



Tony Lynch
**Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group**

Agenda for COVID 19 interagency disinformation and online harms

Standing Agenda:

1. Intro and Overview
2. Updates:
 - a. DART (MoH)
 - b. DPMC (Strategic Comms)
3. Any/all other business
4. Action Points

Alternate Agendas:

7th April 2022

1. Intro and Overview
2. NSG update on capability across government
3. G7 Disinformation Conference update
4. Nuremberg update
5. Updates:
 - a. DART (MoH)
 - b. DPMC (Strategic Comms)
6. Any/all other business
7. Action Points

19th May

1. Welcome and overview (2 mins)
2. Introductions (5 min)
3. Round table introductions – please include a brief overview of the area your agency is working on for s9(2)(a) (10 min)
4. Ministry of Education Senior Business Partner on misinformation/disinformation trends in the education sector and future state. (10 mins)
5. Parliamentary Communications Lead on the recent occupation of Parliament followed by questions (10 mins)
6. Updates: (10 mins)
 - a. DART (MoH)
 - b. DPMC (Strategic Comms)
7. Request on behalf of the COVID-19 Insights Team (2 mins)
8. Any/all other business (5 mins)
9. Action Points and closing (5 mins)

16th June 2022

1. Intro and Overview
2. Updates:
 - a. General (NSG)
 - b. DART (MoH)
 - c. DPMC (Strategic Comms)

3. Lessons Learnt – options and group discussion
4. Any/all other business
5. Action Points

14th July 2022

1. Intro and Overview
2. Updates:
 - a. General (NSG)
 - b. DART (MoH)
 - c. DPMC (Strategic Comms)
3. Ministry of Justice work on Countering Racism
4. Any/all other business
5. Action Points

Released under the Official Information Act 1982