



7 February 2025



Ref: OIA-2024/25-0566

Tēnā koe ,

**Official Information Act request: Correspondence with Facebook regarding vaccine safety and censorship**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 11 January 2025. You requested:

*“copies of all correspondence, emails, records of meetings and any other information about:*

- 1) any communications the NZ government had with Facebook about social media content and/ or government expectations on social media content during the covid restrictions*
- 2) any pressure the NZ put on Facebook to restrict content to protect to promote government policy and/ or claims the Pfizer vaccine or mRNA vaccines were "safe and effective" including copies of any government policies, guidelines or similar to explain restrictions on social media*
- 3) any internal communications about how the NZ government would manage, influence, and or coerce social media during the covid response for the purpose of influencing or censoring content.*
- 4) information to show why BZ took any such actions and who requested or promoted these actions ( whether from within government or external)*
- 5) any review of social media policies after it became clear that the Pfizer jab could cause death or serious harm, including all relevant meeting agendas, file notes, emails, advice papers etc and information to show all who were responsible for making any such decisions, their job title and qualifications.*
- 6) any funding for social media influences to promote the NZ government covid response policies, including sports people, iwi representatives and any other influences and information showing the contracts or any other arrangements with them and rewards, and any expectations on them. Please breach this information down to individual influencers or categories of influencers so far as possible .*
- 7) any compensation, funds or other resources tagged for influencing social media and/ or for compensating New Zealanders for resulting defamation or other resulting harm.*
- 8) in relation to 6 and 7 please provide information to show how this was arranged, structured and managed within the NZ government and also any external/ third party influences on this.”*

**Background**

On 1 July 2020, the COVID-19 Group (the Group) was established as a business unit of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), following the deactivation of the National Crisis Management Centre on 30 June 2020. The Deputy Chief Executive COVID-19 led the Group, which acted as a central COVID-19 response function, and was responsible for oversight, integration, and coordination across the response system as a whole. The Group was responsible for providing assurance to Ministers and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement in New Zealand’s response.

Over the course of the 2022/23 financial year, the Group's functions transferred to Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand, who are now responsible for the ongoing coordination of the COVID-19 response, and the Ministry of Health for matters related to vaccines.

### **Interpretation**

Based on the framing of your request, I am interpreting it as relating to information created during the time of the [All-of-Government Response to Covid](#), and, more specifically, with a focus on vaccine safety and censorship.

Given the information requested appears more closely connected to the functions of Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand and the Ministry of Health, we would usually transfer your request to these agencies under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. However, I am aware that you have sent your request to them directly, as well as to the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, the Social Investment Agency, and the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Christopher Luxon. I therefore refer you to their respective responses, and note that the present response relates solely to information held by DPMC.

You have made several previous requests to DPMC on the matters raised in parts one, two, four, six, seven, and eight of your present request<sup>1</sup>. I refer you to the previous responses you have received from DPMC. Searches have been undertaken of our records from the date of your last relevant request, 28 June 2024, to the date of your present request, 11 January 2025, for each of these parts, and no new DPMC information about the matters you have raised has been identified.

### **Parts Three and Five**

Turning to the parts of your request that you have not previously addressed to DPMC, a search of DPMC's information management systems for staff communications regarding "how the NZ government would manage, influence, and or coerce social media during the covid response for the purpose of influencing or censoring content" returned no results in scope of your request. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found

Likewise, a search of DPMC's information management systems has returned no information in scope of part five of your request. Insofar as this part of your request relates to information held by DPMC, it is refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

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.

Nāku noa, nā,

Clare Ward  
**Executive Director**  
**Strategy, Governance and Engagement**

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, see reply to OIA-2021/22-1189 for DPMC's response to parts six-to-eight of your present request.