

Office of the Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Minister for National Security and Intelligence

Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage



Chuck Schooner
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Ref: PMO 2022-165

Tēnā koe Chuck Schooner

Official Information Act request relating to comments the Prime Minister made on masks

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 11 May 2022.
You requested:

Recently at the M Bovis and Biosecurity Announcement live from Hamilton you were discussing masks with the other elites prior to one of your standard performative announcements . You mention to your off siders and I quote prior to Mr O'Connor putting a mask on

- Feel free to keep the masks on if you like

- it becomes something of a spectator sport

"Please provide in this context what does "it becomes something of a spectator sport" mean? Also if it is a "spectator sport" in the context most people know why are there requirements for masks at all?"

The remark "it becomes something of a spectator sport" referred to the situation at the time, as the Prime Minister is often asked the majority of questions during media conferences, despite having others there to answer questions also.

Information about mask-wearing preventing transmission is available on the Ministry of Health's website here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-use-face-masks-community#how>

Information about the efficacy of masks in preventing transmission of the virus is publicly available on the Unite Against COVID-19 website, in the Cabinet Paper entitled COVID-19 Protection Framework: Updates to Red Settings at www.covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/:

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review our decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Ngā mihi nui,

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff