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OIA-2022-4411

26 July 2022

M. Fitzgibbon
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Dear M. Fitzgibbon

I refer to your request of 31 May 2022, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), as follows:

DFO(T) 06/2022 Application of NZDF Vaccine Scheduled – Members of the Armed Forces, signed by CDF, 25 May 2022, requires NZDF Service Members to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

DFO(T) 06/2022 Paragraph 7 outlines the rationale for adding the COVID-19 Vaccine to the NZDF Vaccine Schedule. Paragraph 7 describes key factors that were considered.

Reference Para 7(b).

“Available clinical evidence that COVID-19 vaccinations reduce the risk of serious or poor health outcomes if a person is infected with COVID-19.” Please provide all the referred to “available clinical evidence” that was used by NZDF to justify these claims, which forms part of the rationale for adding the COVID-19 Vaccine to the NZDF Vaccine Schedule.

Reference Para 7(c).

“Vaccines also reduce the chance of onward transmission through reduced illness severity and duration of illness.” Please provide the studies used by the NZDF to support these claims or the internal NZDF data and research.

Please note that I am after only interested in the research or studies actually used by the NZDF to support the claims in Paragraph 7 (b)(C).

I apologise for the delay in providing this response. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) does not hold studies or internal data / research. The recommendation to include the COVID-19 vaccine to the baseline schedule did not require complex deliberation. All external information used to assist in this decision was open-source, and the Government of New Zealand had mandated vaccines for wider agency and work areas in which the NZDF had significant groups of personnel deployed. This occurred during a global pandemic, and a New Zealand medicines regulator (MedSafe) approved, safe, effective vaccine had become available to help protect against a disease outbreak. In line with other relevant health threats with an available vaccine, it was in the best interests of personnel and the organisation to gain protection from the available vaccine, across the organisation, as soon as possible.

You may be interested in the following publicly available information:

- The Coronavirus Immunisation handbook: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/immunisation-handbook-2020/5-coronavirus-disease-covid-19. This also provides references to scientific studies conducted regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine.

- The vaccine datasheet: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/c/comirnatyinj.pdf.
- Medsafe also publishes up to date information regarding the Comirnaty vaccine, including its clinical efficacy and safety: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/PUArticles/June2021/Spotlight-on-Comirnaty-vaccine.html.
- The Ministry of Health webpage regarding vaccine safety and efficacy: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-effectiveness-and-protection.
- <https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news>.
- https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/variants_update_-_8_april_2022_0.pdf (Page 15).

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request.

Yours sincerely



AJ WOODS
Air Commodore
Chief of Staff HQNZDF