



3 August 2022

Harold

By email: [fyi-request-19960-b87a5886@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19960-b87a5886@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: OIA-2021/22-1529

Dear Harold

**Official Information Act request for advice relating to Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Misinformation and Disinformation**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 19 July 2022. You provided some context to your request, advising this was a follow-up to the responses you received from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 26 May 2022 and 21 July 2021 respectively. You requested:

- ONE: I would like to request a copy of the January 2021 briefing paper "Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis/Disinformation", including the attachment, with the information previously withheld under 9(2)(f)(iv) disclosed as per Ombudsman's guidance.*
- TWO: A copy of the draft framework for strengthening resilience to mis/disinformation that was previously withheld citing 9(2)(g)(i). If there have been multiple draft versions of the framework produced I would like this to be taken to mean all draft versions."*

**DPMC January 2021 briefing "Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis / Disinformation"**

We have carefully considered part one of your request for the information withheld previously under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act in the January 2021 DPMC briefing to the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security and Intelligence "*Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis/Disinformation*". Although some time has passed since this briefing was first provided in early 2021, I can confirm that the information withheld previously in this briefing under section 9(2)(f)(iv) concerns matters which are still under active consideration by the Minister. DPMC's view remains that this information still needs to be withheld to enable the Minister to continue to take advice on the issue of misinformation and disinformation without premature disclosure while decisions are still being formed.

Accordingly, I am refusing your request for the release of the information previously withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv), including the information in the Annex to this briefing to continue to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials.

**Draft strategic framework for strengthening resilience to mis / disinformation**

The only document relevant to this part of your request is an initial working draft document which was exploratory in nature. It was not developed further into formal advice. I have decided to continue to withhold this working draft document under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the

Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

As previously advised in our response to you of 26 May 2022 [DPMC OIA 2021-22-1234 refers], DPMC's strategic approach to misinformation and disinformation has continued to evolve as the situation has changed over time. While a strategic framework was initially proposed, our focus has since shifted to ensuring connection and consistency across different work programmes in addressing misinformation and disinformation. For example, the document '*Communications approach for COVID-19 disinformation, online harms and scams*' dated 23 February and released to you on 12 July 2022 [DPMC OIA 2021-22-1470 refers] reflects that for a period the work narrowed to focus on approaches to address COVID-19 misinformation and disinformation. The strategic framework was not pursued as a stand-alone document as part of this COVID-19 work.

No public interest in releasing the withheld information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

I remind you that you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

We do not intend to publish this response on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website.

Yours sincerely

Dan Eaton  
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive**  
**National Security Group**