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14 June 2023

AI

By email: [fyi-request-22821-ef59a46f@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-22821-ef59a46f@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
Ref: H2023025401

Tēnā koe AI

### **Response to your request for official information**

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 16 May 2023 for:

*"I'd like to request any email communications or meetings (and details if meetings happened that may have been captured such as agenda, follow up and any transcripts if it was a Teams meeting) between the Ministry of Health communications teams and/or teams association with the Covid vaccination program, on the subject of mis or disinformation around Covid and Covid vaccines.*

*To support the scope I'd like to request the above for the time frame between 1st of June 2021 to the 1st of February 2022 with media organisations, Stuff and NZ Herald.*

*I'd like to request any email communications or meetings (and details if meetings happened that may have been captured such as agenda, follow up and any transcripts if it was a Teams meeting) between the Ministry of Health communications teams and/or teams association with the Covid vaccination program, on the subject of mis or disinformation around Covid and Covid vaccines.*

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On 23 and 25 May 2023, Manatū Hauora contacted you in accordance with section 18(B) of the Act to refine your request. You were advised that the current scope of your request is for a large volume of information and may be refused under section 18(f) of the Act unless a refinement is made.

A refinement was sought as there were approximately 500 individuals who worked at Manatū Hauora during the time period requested who may have been involved in discussions about the COVID-19 vaccine.

On 24 May 2023, you responded with:

*"Despite my best attempts to limit the scope to a specific timeframe, with specific organisations and on a specific topic you've suggested further I limit the request to*

*correspondence between senior members of the media teams within Manatū Hauora and the National Immunisation Programme within a shorter time period.*

*I think the request is well constrained as it is. How would we both have confidence that senior media team members are the only ones who have contact with those organisations during the specified time period on the specified topic?"*

In light of your response, I have interpreted your request as being meetings between the Manatū Hauora Communications Team and teams in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme on the subject of mis- and disinformation on COVID vaccines. I can confirm that there were no meetings held between these Ministry teams during the requested time period on that specific topic. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

As signalled above, there were approximately 500 individuals who worked at Manatū Hauora during the time period who may have been involved in discussions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Further, there were approximately 40 staff members in the Manatū Hauora Media and Communications teams that may have discussed mis-information and dis-information related to the COVID vaccine; however, there were no meetings held specifically on the subject.

Regarding the second part of your request, I have interpreted this as referring to meetings between the Manatū Hauora Communications Team, the teams in the COVID-19 Vaccine Programme, and media organisations Stuff and the NZ Herald between 1 June 2021 to 1 February 2022. By way of context, the Manatū Hauora Media Team received an average of one email per minute from media organisations, responded to over 5,000 media enquiries, published nearly 400 media releases and prepared for 97 press conferences during this time period. I can confirm that there is no record of any meetings held between Manatū Hauora and these groups regarding mis- and dis-information. Therefore, this part of your request is also refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

Please note Manatū Hauora has released a significant amount of information relating to mis- and disinformation, which you may find useful:

- Response to OIA H202302208104: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/19329/response/75703/attach/7/H202208104%20Response.pdf>
- Response to OIA H2022015923: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/20988/response/79851/attach/4/H2022015923%20Response.pdf>
- Response to OIA H2022015932: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/20989/response/79850/attach/4/H2022015932%20Response.pdf>
- Response to OIA H2022018178: <https://fyi.org.nz/request/21344-dart-communications-mentioning-the-bfd>

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on [oiagr@health.govt.nz](mailto:oiagr@health.govt.nz).

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Turner', is positioned above the typed name.

Sarah Turner  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Government and Executive Services | Te Pou Whakatere Kāwanatanga**