

Hon Grant Robertson

MP for Wellington Central

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister of Finance

Minister for Infrastructure

Minister for Sport and Recreation



12 December 2022

S Hill

fyi-request-20908-33d54406@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear S

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 28 November 2022.
You requested:

1. At the time of negotiation with Pfizer for the COVID-19 vaccine, was the Minister of Finance aware that Pfizer did NOT test whether the COVID-19 vaccine prevented transmission of the virus before it entered the market?

2. Is the Minister of Finance currently aware that Pfizer did NOT test whether the COVID[1]19 vaccine prevented transmission of the virus before it entered the market?

Medsafe provides independent advice to the Government and approves all medicines and vaccine available in New Zealand. Medsafe evaluates applications to ensure that they comply with international standards and local requirements for quality, and that the expected benefits outweigh the risks of harm in the intended treatment population. Only then will Medsafe recommend approval for use in New Zealand.

Medsafe first recommended provisional approval to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 in February 2021. Through the regulatory approval process, Medsafe concluded that the Pfizer vaccine has been tested and was safe and effective for the vaccine's use to protect individuals from the virus in New Zealand.

I do not hold any specific information about whether Pfizer had tested its COVID-19 vaccine for prevention of transmission of the virus prior to the vaccine entering the world market. Accordingly, I refuse your request under section 18(e) of the Act on the basis that the information does not exist.

You can find additional information on:

- Medsafe's COVID-19 vaccine approval process at [COVID-19 Vaccine Approval Process \(medsafe.govt.nz\)](https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/Vaccine/Approval/Process).
- COVID-19 variant transmission at [COVID-19: Science news | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/news/COVID-19-variant-transmission).
- The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisor Group's advice at [COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group \(CV TAG\) | Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/news/COVID-19-vaccine-technical-advisory-group)

This reply addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Grant Robertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Grant" being more prominent than the last name "Robertson".

Hon Grant Robertson
Minister of Finance