



22 February 2022

Scott

[fyi-request-17424-507712bb@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-17424-507712bb@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: OIA-2021/22-0532

Dear Scott

### **Official Information Act request for eight specific national security documents**

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received on 2 November 2021. You requested:

- “ONE: The December 2018 memo titled “Our parting thoughts and wishes for the National Security System” [1819NSPD/064]*
- TWO: The December 2018 briefing titled “Prevention of Violent Extremism - Update” [1819NSPD/065]*
- THREE: The March 2019 briefing titled “Proposed Counter-terrorism Cabinet papers” [1819NSPD/094]*
- FOUR: The March 2019 memo titled “Social Media and Harmful Online Content” [1819NSPD/107]*
- FIVE: The September 2019 Cabinet paper titled “National Terrorism Threat Level and Response System” [ERS-19-SUB-0020]*
- SIX: The November 2019 Cabinet paper titled “Progress Against the National Security and Intelligence Priorities” [ERS-19-SUB-0038]*
- SEVEN: The December 2019 briefing titled “Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee Meeting 4 December 2019 - Managing National Security Information in Proceedings” [1920NSP/038]*
- EIGHT: The October 2020 briefing titled “QAnon - Designation and Dis-information” [2021NSP/014]”.*

I last wrote to you on 1 February 2022 advising that I had decided to withhold two documents in full and that consultations were being completed before I released the remainder of the documents to you. I apologise for the delay in providing you with the requested information. I am now in a position to respond to the remainder of your request.

I note that we wrote to you on 15 November 2021, advising you that your request for Documents Five and Six (2019 papers submitted to the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee) had been transferred to the Minister for National Security and Intelligence (Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern).

As noted above, on 1 February 2022 I wrote to you advising that the following documents were withheld in full:

**Document One** *“Our parting thoughts and wishes for the National Security System” (December 2018) [1819NSPD/064]* was withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of New Zealand.
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion

**Document Eight:** *“QAnon - Designation and Dis-information” (October 2020) [2021NSP/014]* provided preliminary advice and was withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(c), to protect the health or safety of members of the public; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

### **Information to be released**

Please find **attached** the following documents listed below, subject to information being withheld as noted:

**Document Two:** *“Prevention of Violent Extremism - Update” (December 2018) [1819NSPD/065].*

**Document Three:** *“Proposed Counter-terrorism Cabinet papers” (March 2019) [1819NSPD/094].* As noted in my previous response, this briefing reflected the position at a particular point in time. The briefing was submitted on the morning of 15 March 2019 and would not have been read by the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security and Intelligence, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, until some time later. Given the passage of time and events, including the terrorist attack on the Christchurch mosques that have happened since this briefing was written, it does not necessarily reflect the current position.

**Document Four:** *“Social Media and Harmful Online Content” (March 2019) [1819NSPD/107]*

**Document Seven:** *“Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee Meeting 4 December 2019 - Managing National Security Information in Proceedings” (December 2019) [1920NSP/038].*

The relevant sections of the Act under which some information contained in these briefings has been withheld are:

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of New Zealand;
- some names and contact details have been withheld under section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals;
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

Where information has been withheld under section 9 of the Act, no public interest in releasing the withheld information has been identified that would be sufficient to override the reasons for withholding it.

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

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely

Tony Lynch  
**Deputy Chief Executive**  
**National Security Group**

Enc: information for release, consisting of four DPMC briefings.