



5 October 2022

Harold  
fyi-request-19609-2fa65ee9@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2021/22-1545

Dear Harold

**Official Information Act request for copies of various documents relating to the COVID-19 interagency disinformation and online harms group**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 27 July 2022. You requested:

*ONE: The minutes, agenda and action points for all meetings of the COVID 19 interagency disinformation and online harms group held since the beginning of April 2022*

*TWO: If the standing agenda for this group has gone through any updates since the beginning of April 2022 I would like to request all versions of the standing agenda produced during this period*

*THREE: If DPMC produced any submissions, presentations or other items that were tabled or presented for 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 3 ("Strategic view of disinformation landscape") then I would like to request a copies of these documents*

*FOUR: I would like to request a copy of the "Working Group Terms of Reference" referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 4)*

*FIVE: I would like to request a copy of the "Landscape Report" Request for Proposal and any other RFX documentation produced for the procurement of this "Landscape Report" (14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 5)*

*SIX: If the procurement of this "Landscape Report" has been awarded I would like to request the identity of the organisation it was awarded to*

*SEVEN: If the "Landscape Report" has been completed I would like to request a copy of it*

*EIGHT: I would like to request a copy of the "Work Plan (6 month goals)" referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 8)*

*NINE: If any other "Work Plans" for the group have been produced since the one referred to in 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 8, I would like to request copies of all these more recent work plans as well*

*TEN: I would like to request copies of any submissions, presentations or other items produced by the National Security Group that were tabled or presented for 24 March 2022 alternate agenda item 5c ("Quick fire updates... Disinformation wider landscape (NSG)")*

In our response dated 24 August 2022, we responded to questions 1 (minutes and agenda but not the action points), 2, 3, 4, and 10, and extended the time frame for responding to your request by 30 working days under section 15A of the Act, because further consultations were needed before a decision could be made on the request. I am now in a position to respond to the remainder of your questions, which I will do in turn.

**1. The minutes, agenda and action points for all meetings of the COVID 19 interagency disinformation and online harms group held since the beginning of April 2022**

As noted above, the part of your request for minutes and agendas were addressed in our previous response. With regard to action points held since April 2022, I have decided to release these in part. Please also note that the work plan and action log referenced was produced as an internal record of the key undertakings being taken by agencies and organisations in response to an increase in COVID-19 disinformation and online harms. The coordination of the working group moved to DPMC's National Security Group in July 2022.

Some information is withheld subject to the following section of the Act:

- Section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals.

**5. I would like to request a copy of the "Landscape Report" Request for Proposal and any other RFX documentation produced for the procurement of this "Landscape Report" (14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 5)**

I have decided to release the RFP document related to this procurement in full. This procurement for independent analysis of the disinformation landscape was to support and inform the COVID-19 response. The analysis and insights were used to build a strategic picture of the mis- and disinformation context and to inform our response to mis- and disinformation and approach to building resilience to its harms. Please note that the term of the contract stipulated in the RFP was subsequently identified as extending beyond the COVID-19 Group's requirements. Due to this, the term of the contract was modified to a 1-month period for the disinformation landscape reports.

**6 If the procurement of this "Landscape Report" has been awarded I would like to request the identity of the organisation it was awarded to**

I can confirm that the procurement was awarded to The Disinformation Project.

**7. If the "Landscape Report" has been completed I would like to request a copy of it**

I can confirm that the 'Landscape Report' has been completed. The two reports dated 11 July 2022 and 24 July 2022 are both provided in Attachment A.

The Landscape Report dated 11 July 2022 is released to you in part. Some information is withheld subject to the following section of the Act:

- Section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals,
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future,
- 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.

The Landscape report dated 25 July 2022 is released to you in part. Some information is withheld subject to the following section of the Act:

- Section 6(d), as the making available of that information would be likely to endanger the safety of any person,

- Section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals,
- Section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future,
- 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.

Whilst these reports provided interesting context for the greater information landscape, only COVID-19 related material was required in line with the RFP. This COVID-19 material was given to the COVID-19 communications team for their requirements

**8. I would like to request a copy of the “Work Plan (6 month goals)” referred to in the 14 February 2022 alternate agenda (item 8)**

I have decided to release the workplan (6 month goals) in full. This information is provided in Attachment A.

**9. If any other “Work Plans” for the group have been produced since the one referred to in 14 February 2022 alternate agenda item 8, I would like to request copies of all these more recent work plans as well.**

I can confirm a DRAFT Communications and engagement work plan was produced, titled ‘COVID-19 misinformation, online harms and scams’. This DRAFT workplan is released to you in full. Please note the draft work plan was produced as a briefing tool to demonstrate communications activities underway to address COVID-19 disinformation and online harms. Not all projects listed have been undertaken by the COVID-19 response given the changing environment. Examples of products developed can be found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/misinformation-scams-and-online-harm/>.

For your reference, a list of acronyms and initialism used in the release material is below:

BAU – Business as usual  
 CCB – The COVID-19 Chief Executives Board  
 CERT – Computer Emergency Response Team  
 CPF – COVID-19 Protection Framework  
 CVIP – COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme, Ministry of Health  
 DIA – The Department of Internal Affairs  
 DART – Disinformation Assessment and Response Team, Ministry of Health  
 DPMC – The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
 HRC – The Human Rights Commission  
 ISD – The Institute of Strategic Dialogue  
 MOH – The Ministry of Health  
 NAB – The National Assessments Bureau  
 TPM – Te Pūnaha Matatini  
 TRA – The Research Agency  
 UAC – Unite Against COVID-19

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

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

This response will be published on DPMC'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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marika Hughes".

Marika Hughes  
**Acting Deputy Chief Executive**  
**National Security Group**