



9 December 2022

Ombudsman Ref: 589153
DPMC Ref: OIA-2021/22-1529

Harold Shine

By email: fyi-request-19960-b87a5886@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Harold Shine

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

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) requests to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) relating to mis/disinformation. DPMC responded to your related requests on 26 July 2021, 26 May 2022 and 3 August 2022.

In our response we released a copy a DPMC briefing "*Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis/Disinformation*" (January 2021) with some redactions and withheld an initial, working draft of our strategic framework. You asked the Ombudsman to investigation information withheld from the briefing under section 9(2)(f)(iv) and the withholding of the initial working draft framework under section 9(2)(g)(i).

In the light of your complaint to the Ombudsman, DPMC has reassessed both documents. Please find attached:

- Document 1: A revised copy of the DPMC briefing "*Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis/Disinformation*" releasing information previously withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act.
- Document 2: The initial working draft "*Strategic Framework for Strengthening New Zealand's Resilience to Mis- & Disinformation*".

For context, there are still matters under active consideration by Ministers and officials advising them that were included in the DPMC briefing (Document 1 attached). Given the time that has passed and the evolution of this work, we believe we can now release most of the information that was previously withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv).

Some parts of these documents continue to be withheld under the following sections of the Act, as marked in the attached document:

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of New Zealand.
- section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals.
- section 9(2)(b)(ii), to protect the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or who is the subject of the information.
- section 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect the supply of similar information in the future, where information was provided in confidence.
- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials.
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion.

- section 9(2)(j), to enable negotiations to be carried on without prejudice or disadvantage.

Document 2, attached, was the initial working draft strategic framework for strengthening New Zealand's resilience to mis/disinformation. This working draft was internal to DPMC. As previously advised, the strategic framework was not pursued as a stand-alone document as part of this work. DPMC's strategic approach to mis/disinformation evolved as the situation has changed over time and our focus has since shifted. Although this is a very initial draft, we believe it can be now released to you with only a small amount of information continuing to be withheld.

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.

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.

This response may 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



Tony Lynch
Deputy Chief Executive
National Security Group

Enc: Release documents - revised copy of the DPMC briefing working draft strategic framework