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OIA-2021-4071

OIA-2021-4072

23 June 2021

Alan Campbell

fyi-request-15263-3df3a376@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Alan Campbell

I refer to your requests of 23 and 25 April 2021, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), for the following:

- *Provide information on the risk assessment completed by the NZDF in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine.*

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) refers to guidance from the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Medsafe in regards to any consideration of risk around the COVID-19 vaccine.

- *Provide information on the decision-making process used to mandate the vaccine given the low risk of COVID-19 in the people under the control of the NZDF.*

All personnel have to give informed consent to be vaccinated. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination has been added to the NZDF Individual Readiness Requirements as part of the baseline vaccination programme pursuant to Defence Force Orders and in accordance with standard processes.

Defence Force Order 3, Part 9, Chapter 6.36 states:

Vaccinations *The vaccinations for members of the Armed Forces are to be maintained according to the NZDF Vaccination Schedule.*

Additional vaccinations may be required for specific deployments.

- *Provide information on what career impacts NZDF personal may incur if they are to sustain a significant side effect from the vaccine.*

Any potential impact would be assessed on a case by case basis, dependant on the individual's clinical scenario.

- *Provide information on what discussions have been held with the NZ Government and other government agencies including the Ministry of Health relating to the provision of the vaccine to NZDF personal.*

The NZDF has been involved as an equivalent to District Health Board services around planning and delivery of the immunisation programme through our health system. The

NZDF has responded to the MoH scheduling requirements to vaccinate New Zealanders who are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of their work.

- *Please provide all advice received by the NZDF from government and private agencies, and the NZ Government executive related to the effectiveness, legality and morality of adding the Covid-19 vaccine to the baseline vaccine requirement.*

The NZDF has received advice from Crown Law. This advice is legally privileged, and is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(h) of the OIA. The addition of the COVID-19 vaccine to baseline vaccination requirements was assessed internally as part of safe health standard requirements, as are all other vaccinations.

- *Please advise on the decision process and approvals received to add the covid-19 vaccine to the baseline vaccines, and for stopping current recruits from marching out if they are not vaccinated.*

The decision process is a clinical recommendation, followed by policy change approvals.

- *Further, please provide any documentation discussing or acknowledging the conditional consent nature of the Medsafe authorisation and the outstanding safety questions they have.*

The NZDF has followed all promulgated MoH and Medsafe guidance with regards to vaccine provision. No NZDF-specific advice has been sought. A copy of the February 2021 advice from the Ministry of Health is enclosed.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request.

Yours sincerely



AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosure:

1. Ministry of Health Latest COVID-19 Vaccine Key Messages