

Reference: 20210515

23 November 2021

Simon Veritas
fyi-request-17249-6aa716e0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Simon

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 28 October 2021. You requested:

1. Any cost:benefit analyses of various policy approaches to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including 1a - the date requested 1b - the date received 1c - the date the information was considered by Cabinet

2 if you cannot provide the full text, please provide a listing of all costs and benefits considered in any cost:benefit analysis (e.g. - the following is purely theoretical) Level 4:

Benefits: Fewer deaths

Costs: Health reductions from reduced gym attendance and exercise

3 if you are aware, could you also provide the title and date of any cost:benefit analyses on COVID-19 that were provided to other state sector ministries or departments (e.g. MoH)

The Government's response to COVID-19 encompasses a wide range of policies and investments across a wide range of agencies. The Treasury has provided advice on the costs and benefits of various aspects of the response over time; it does not hold a cost benefit analysis which captures the entire response programme. Accordingly, I have refused much of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA – *the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or cannot be found.*

There is, however, a range of publicly available information that provides a picture of the kinds costs and benefits the Treasury has considered when providing advice on COVID-related matters.

In late-April, the Treasury published a special topic on our Alert Level economic impact assumptions. This can be viewed here: [WEU Special Topic – Alert Level Assumptions Refresh \(BEFU 2021\) \(treasury.govt.nz\)](#)

The Treasury's advice on the economic and fiscal impacts of recent Alert Level decisions will be proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) together with advice from the Director-General of Health, the Treasury, and other agencies.

This information will be released on the DPMC website here:

<https://dpmc.govt.nz/publications/proactive-release-cabinet-material>

Some work commissioned to consider the economic impacts of COVID-19, including timing of further border re-opening and the impact of COVID-19 resurgences has also been previously released: <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/information-release/release-sense-partners-and-infometrics-reports-covid-19>

In February this year, the Treasury published a blog post on the use of cost-benefit analysis in advice on the COVID response. This can be viewed here: [Economic advice in a time of COVID: How the New Zealand Treasury navigated the uncertainty of the global pandemic.](#)

Finally, the Treasury has published analysis on the wellbeing impacts of COVID-19. This considers both the economic impact of COVID, but it also considered a broader living standards lens, considering the broader impact on New Zealanders' wellbeing. This can be viewed here: [Discussion Paper: He Kāhui Waiora: Living Standards Framework and He Ara Waiora - Covid-19: Impacts on Wellbeing \(DP 20/02\) - July 2020 \(treasury.govt.nz\).](#)

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Treasury website.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Nees
Acting Manager, Economic Policy