

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health



19 SEP 2022

Harold

fyi-request-19478-aa69130a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref. AVOIA38

Tēnā koe Harold

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 26 May 2022 to the former Minister for COVID-19 Response, Hon Chris Hipkins, for copies of documents relating to the COVID-19 response. I am responding to you as the matters you raise now fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

Due to the volume of information in scope of your request, my office has decided to satisfy your request through a staged release to avoid delays in communicating a decision on your request.

Please refer to the appendices overleaf for further information regarding this partial release and the remaining tranches. The documents being released to you in this first tranche are itemised in Appendix 1 which outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time. My office will endeavour to provide the remaining information to you as soon as reasonably practicable.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ayesha Verrall'.

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health



Appendix 1: List of documents for release (Tranche 1)

#	Date received	Document ref #	Document type and title	Decision on release
1	17 January 2022	20220036	Briefing - Adapting the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Strategy to prepare for and manage Omicron	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.
2	30 January 2022	20212778	Briefing - Ensuring sufficient Pfizer supply in the first half of 2022	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act, where its release would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information.
3	4 February 2022	20220128	Briefing - Readiness to shift to Phase Two of the Omicron response plan	Some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9(2)(a)• 9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege
4	4 February 2022	20220163	Briefing - Options for a Bubble of One provision to operate from the commencement of phase 2 of our Omicron strategy	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
5	6 February 2022	20220166	Memorandum - Identification and management of close contacts in the event of a COVID-19 exposure in the House of Representatives	
6	18 February 2022	20220236	Briefing - Retail sales of rapid antigen tests to individual members of the public	Some information withheld under section the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9(2)(a)• 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers and officers and employees of any

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
 Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
 Minister for Seniors
 Associate Minister of Health



#	Date received	Document ref #	Document type and title	Decision on release
				public service agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(h)
7	21 February 2022	20220182	Briefing - Processing of requests under the Official Information Act 1982 and learnings from the Pfizer information release incident	Some information withheld under section the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i)
8	22 February 2022	20220302	Briefing - Shifting to Phase Three of the Omicron response strategy	Some information withheld under the following sections of the Act:
9	23 February 2022	20220310	Briefing - Further information on the retail sale of rapid antigen tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(a) 9(2)(h)
10	23 February 2022	20220279	Briefing - Reconnecting New Zealanders: Monitoring, compliance and enforcement of self-administered tests	Some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(a) 9(2)(g)(i)
11	23 February 2022	20220286	Briefing - Pre-departure testing and vaccination requirements for the no isolation pathway	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
12	2 March 2022	20220374	Briefing - Enabling COVID-19 cases who are critical workers to return to work	Some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(a) 9(2)(h) 9(2)(g)(i)
13	17 March 2022	20220456	Briefing - Availability and distribution of COVID-19 therapeutics for use in the community	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
14	21 March 2022	20220508	Briefing - COVID-19 vaccines: Expiry of doses donated to COVAX	Withheld in full under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9(2)(b)(ii) 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions that protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health



#	Date received	Document ref #	Document type and title	Decision on release
15	1 April 2022	20220241	Briefing - Transitioning the COVID-19 response functions to the new system structure in 2022	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
16	1 April 2022	20220582	Briefing - COVID-19 Health System Response: Oxygen Supply and Environmental Issues	
17	8 April 2022	20220610	Briefing - Update on disability COVID-19 outbreak response	
18	14 April 2022	20220682	Briefing - Transitioning the COVID-19 response functions to the new system structure in 2022	
19	20 April 2022	20220639	Briefing - COVID-19 vaccine purchasing and management transition to Pharmac	Some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9(2)(a)• 9(2)(b)(ii)
20	27 April 2022	20220554	Briefing - Review of pre-departure testing and vaccination requirements for arrivals to New Zealand	Some information withheld under section the following sections if the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9(2)(a)• 9(2)(f)(iv)• 9(2)(g)(i)• 9(2)(h)

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

Minister for COVID-19 Response
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health



Appendix 2: List of documents for pending release (Tranche 2)

- 21 December 2021 - Briefing 20212772 - COVID-19 vaccine booster doses and response to the Omicron variant
- 8 January 2022 - Briefing 20220003 - Postponing commencement of new arrangements at the air border
- 8 January 2022 - Briefing 20220065 - COVID-19 Therapeutics Portfolio – funding to secure products for COVID-19 prevention and treatment
- 21 January 2022 - Briefing 20220023 - COVID-19 Vaccine Portfolio Update – January 2022
- 10 February - Briefing 20220175 - Proposed changes to managed isolation and quarantine settings in Phase Two and Phase Three of the Omicron response plan
- 18 February - Briefing 20220038 - Further advice on expanding the influenza immunisation programme for 2022 in response to COVID-19
- 21 February 2022 - Briefing 20220254 - Requiring COVID-19 vaccine booster doses to maintain vaccination status in the New Zealand context
- 28 February 2022 - Briefing 20220260 - COVID-19 Vaccines: Donating the remaining AstraZeneca and Janssen doses to the COVAX AMC
- 7 March 2022 - Briefing 20220324 - Implementing an enhanced and expanded Influenza immunisation programme for 2022 in response to COVID-19
- 9 March 2022 - Briefing 20220272 - Purchase of additional COVID-19 vaccines from mRNA vaccine suppliers
- 6 April 2022 - Briefing 20220551 - Lifting importation and use restrictions on unapproved COVID-19 vaccines
- 8 April 2022 - Briefing 29229573 - Concluding New Zealand's purchase agreement with AstraZeneca