



Harold
fyi-request-19522-09380686@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Harold

Official Information Act requests for information relating to the COVID-19 false information reporting cell

I refer to your follow-up Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request 20 July 2022 that included a request for terms of reference for a proposed virtual reporting cell for COVID-19 disinformation.

Our response to you explained that there was only a very early initial draft terms of reference and these were withheld in full under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act. You asked the Ombudsman to investigate our responses to your request and, in particular, the withholding of the draft terms of reference.

In light of your complaint and the passage of time since your original requests, we have reassessed the initial draft terms of reference, and agreed that these can now be released to you.

Please find attached "*Virtual triaging and reporting cell: COVID-related mis/disinformation and risks to the COVID-19 response: Terms of Reference.*" As explained, this document is an initial draft, and you will see that there are comments tracked in the draft reflecting its early stage of development. Some officials' names have been withheld under section 9(2)(g)(ii) of the Act, to prevent improper pressure or harassment.

We have provided some context on the document itself that explains that these were initial, draft terms of reference for discussion about a 'virtual reporting cell' that was never established. An initial proposal to set up an interagency group to report on nationally significant COVID-19 disinformation was not pursued. These draft Terms of Reference were never finalised or considered further.

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

Bridget White
Executive Director, National Security

Cc: The office of the Ombudsman