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Richard Wang

By email: [fyi-request-20552-dced4d49@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-20552-dced4d49@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Ref: H2022012603

Tēnā koe Richard

### **Response to your request for official information**

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora on 14 September 2022 for information regarding COVID-19 reporting. You requested:

*"I understand that you are changing from reporting COVID numbers daily, to reporting weekly. People are questioning why this change, which both systematically reduces the PR impact of daily reporting COVID death numbers resulting from the failure to keep COVID out of New Zealand and increases the friction for researchers monitoring for the inevitable boom in case numbers, was made.*

*1) Please provide all information held by MoH in regards this decision, preferably in electronic form, this should include internal reports and communications with other agencies and ministers.*

*2) The Official Information Act does not only cover documents, but information held by employees of an agency subject to such. In discussions regarding the change from daily to weekly reporting, was the impact on public perception of weekly reporting vs. daily reporting mentioned by any participant at any point, and if so, in what context?"*

On 13 October 2022, the due date for responding to your request was extended pursuant to section 15A of the Act as consultations that are necessary to make a decision on the request are such that a proper response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit. Please accept our apologies for the delay in communicating a decision on your request.

Two documents have been identified within scope of your request, as itemised in the appendix overleaf. 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.

The move to reporting COVID-19 data on a weekly basis reflects the change in the pandemic response and the frequency of reporting aligns with the reporting of other communicable diseases, which are reported on either weekly (influenza during the annual flu season) or monthly (for other notifiable diseases).

Other countries, such as Australia, have made a similar decision to adjust the frequency of COVID-19 reporting. Australia is moving to weekly reporting from the end of this week. The weekly figures will continue to include seven-day averages for case numbers, deaths and hospitalisations. In addition, from late September Manatū Hauora started publishing each week its analysis of trends and insights based on the latest collected COVID-19 data.

It's important to note that while we have moved to reporting weekly rather than daily, daily case data has continued to be publicly available to media and research organisations.

Manatū Hauora will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation, as we have done since the start of the pandemic, and more frequent reporting can be reactivated in future, should that be required.

I trust this information fulfils your request. 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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrew Old  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui**

## Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
1	26 August 2022	Memo: <i>Discontinuing the Daily COVID-19 Situational Report</i>	Released in full
2	9 September 2022	Memo: <i>COVID-19 Weekly Situation Report: Joint Paper from Te Whatu Ora and Public Health Agency, Manatū Hauoroa</i>	Released with some information withheld under the following sections of the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9(2)(a) – to protect personal privacy;</li><li>• 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 of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.</li></ul>