

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

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



7 November 2022

Scott

fyi-request-20810-64edb4c8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: AVOIA123-2022

Tēnā koe Scott,

Official Information Act request for Cabinet papers

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 10 October 2022. You requested:

“ONE: In a 1 April briefing recently released to me by your office, a briefing on the topic of the “transition into living with COVID-19” is referred to “Officials will also report back on the long-term trajectory and strategic direction for COVID-19, including our transition into living with COVID-19 as an endemic virus (joint Health and DPMC lead, reporting to Hon Chris Hipkins) by the end of April 2022.”

Briefing accessible here, quote on page 24:

<https://fyi.org.nz/request/20336/response/78112/attach/5/AVOIA92%20Document%20Binder%20Redacted.pdf>

I would like to request a copy of the briefing referred to here.

TWO: In a 20 May briefing, a set of papers related to the COVID-19 response due to be taken to Cabinet in June are referred to:

“DPMC are leading all of government work to determine the efficacy of wider tools/levers used in the COVID-19 response to date... All this work will be brought together for a Cabinet paper led by DPMC. There is a question about whether this will be a separate Cabinet paper tracking to the original timeframe of 13 June or included with the long-term strategy paper at the end of June. Regardless, the paper will build on the scenario work from the variants of concern planning with a whole-of-government view on operational preparedness.” (Quote on page 84 above).

I would like to request copies of the Cabinet papers on the topics of COVID-19 Variants of Concern, operational preparedness and long-term strategy referred to here.”

Information publicly available

The following information is within scope of your request and is or will soon be publicly available on the Unite against COVID-19 website:

Question	Date	Document Description	Website Address
ONE & TWO	1 July 2022	COVID-19: Strategy for post winter	Available at: covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Alert-levels-and-restrictions/25-October-2022/COVID-19-Strategy-for-Post-Winter-04072022.pdf

Question	Date	Document Description	Website Address
TWO	7 June 2022	COVID-19: Confirming New Zealand's approach to variants of concern	Available at: https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/Alert-levels-and-restrictions/4-November-2022/COVID-19-Confirming-New-Zealands-Approach-to-Variants-of-Concern-13062022.pdf
ONE	5 September 2022	Future of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and Moving to the New Approach	Will be publicly available on or before 25 November 2022 at: covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/

Accordingly, I have refused your request for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the Act as the information requested is or soon will be publicly available.

You will also note from the table above that although the date originally referenced in Question One was 'by the end of April 2022', the two documents considered to be within scope of this question were actually later than this date.

You have the right to ask the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Nāku noa, nā



Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall
Minister for COVID-19 Response