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22 December 2022

P Taylor

By email: fyi-request-20988-fa0377a3@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H2022017790

Tēnā koe P Taylor

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 29 November 2022 in response to information provided to you under reference H2022015923. You stated:

“According to The Disinformation Project, who are widely cited within the current New Zealand government, the definition of disinformation is: “Disinformation is false information that was created with the intent to harm a person, community, or organisation.” The document (Document 10A) that you have previously provided is titled as “COVID Disinformation Spreadsheet” as per the Appendix 1 you have also previously provided. Labelling this document as “COVID Disinformation Spreadsheet” implies that the information referenced within the document is disinformation and must therefore meet the two criteria within the definition of ‘disinformation’:

- a). That the information referenced is false.*
- b). That the creator of such information intended to cause harm to a person, community, or organisation.”*

You requested:

“... all information that the Disinformation Assessment and Response Team, or CERT NZ, used to justify their determination, or assessment, that the information referenced in Document 10A meets those two criteria of disinformation”

Document 10A, which was provided to you on 28 November 2022, is information reported to CERT NZ by members of the public. CERT NZ had provided this information to Manatū Hauora, with the spreadsheet titled ‘COVID Disinformation Spreadsheet’.

The content of document 10A has not been determined or assessed by Manatū Hauora to meet the two criteria of disinformation that you have identified. CERT NZ has advised that no assessment was undertaken. CERT NZ’s role was to act as a collection point, not to determine if any given report is in fact misinformation or disinformation. Under section 18(e) of the Act I am unable to provide you with any “information that the Disinformation Assessment and Response Team, or CERT NZ, used to justify their determination, or assessment, that the information referenced in Document 10A meets those two criteria of disinformation” as no such information exists.

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



Sarah Turner
Deputy Director General
Government and Executive Services | Te Pou Whakatere Kāwanatanga