



13 January 2023

P Taylor
fyi-request-21354-35b48658@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-2022/23-0399

Dear P Taylor

**Official Information Act request for communications with Stuff regarding the project
“Stuff: The Whole Truth” between 1 April 2021 and 1 January 2022**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 6 December 2022. You requested:

“1. In the "COVID-19 Disinformation and harmful content" document (dated 18 November 2021), section 29, it states: "The COVID-19 Group and the Ministry of Health also work jointly on providing guidance to the health sector, education sector, businesses, community leaders and the public on responding to COVID-19 mis- and disinformation."

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffyi.org.nz%2Frequest%2F20099%2Fresponse%2F76770%2Fattach%2F5%2F4605435%2520RELEASE%2520COVID%252019%2520Disinformation%2520and%2520harmful%2520content.PDF.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cinformation%40dpmc.govt.nz%7C2aa5432081684c4933dd08dad76e691e%7Ceea6053309ef4b7a94060f38551cc613%7C0%7C0%7C638059166904183288%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQljoIV2luMzliLCJBTiI6lk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C2000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ienyMV0PpQ9w3OiZObcir1hBcTypUEYpsLCmjRmaKDQ%3D&reserved=0>

2. In the same document in section 30, it states: "Examples of the COVID-19 communications activity to respond to misinformation include:", and under a bullet point, "Supporting projects like Stuff: The Whole Truth".

3. I would like to request all information associated with supporting the "Stuff: The Whole Truth" project, be it in the form of reports or communications or any other transmitted medium, between the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Stuff Limited over the period of 01 April 2021 and 01 January 2022."

The “Stuff: The Whole Truth” project was independent of, and not funded by, the COVID-19 response. As is usual practice, media organisations can request verification of official information through existing media and communication channels and the Official Information Act process. During the period that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) was responsible for strategic communication and coordination and communications to address COVID-19 mis and disinformation, officials met with the Stuff project team. On 16 November 2022, that function moved from DPMC to the Ministry of Health.

We have undertaken a search of our systems and we have only identified one item, the email chain *Re: Catch up on COVID-19 vaccine programme support The Whole Truth*, within scope of your request.

I have decided to release this document, subject to information being withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 6(d), to maintain the safety of any person; and
- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals.

In making my decision, I have taken the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act into account.

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

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet'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



Julie Knauf
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
COVID-19 Group