

# Hon Dr Megan Woods

MP for Wigram

Minister of Housing

Minister for Infrastructure

Minister of Energy and Resources

Minister for Building and Construction

Associate Minister of Finance



Nick Kearney

Email: [fyi-request-23007-bcc3c9d1@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-23007-bcc3c9d1@requests.fyi.org.nz)

4 JUL 2023

Ref: OIA23-085

Dear Mr Kearney

Thank you for your email of 5 June 2023 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*On June 21 last year you established the above taskforce to enquire into the plasterboard shortage that was present at the time. I would like information on how many meetings the taskforce has had and what outcomes have been achieved by the taskforce over the last year.*

In regard to your request for how many meetings the taskforce has had, the Plasterboard Taskforce, active from June 2022 until it was reformed into the Critical Materials Taskforce, met on three occasions. These meetings took place on:

- Monday, 27 June 2022;
- Tuesday, 19 July 2022; and
- Wednesday, 17 August 2022.

Additionally, the Critical Materials Taskforce, established in late 2022, has so far met on four occasions. These meetings took place on:

- Monday, 31 October 2022;
- Thursday, 15 December 2022;
- Friday, 3 March 2023; and
- Monday, 8 May 2023.

The Plasterboard Taskforce was established with key construction, building consent and supply chain experts to look at what more could be done to ease plasterboard shortages, including the potential for legislative or regulatory change. I note Taskforce membership for both the Plasterboard and Critical Materials Taskforce is voluntary, and members were not remunerated for the advice and support they provided to the Government.

The Plasterboard Taskforce worked with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to produce guidance on building product substitution for building consent authorities and architectural design bodies on how to respond to minor variations of plasterboard elements, to reduce over-reliance on specific products. Further versions of the guidance were published to include information about alternative plasterboard products as well as a step-by-step guide for the plasterboard substitution process.


The Commerce Commission noted that these were the right actions to take in its report on the Residential Building Supplies Market Study. The plasterboard shortages were solved by the industry and government working together. When made aware of the issues and supported to make substitutions, the building supply industry were able to source alternative products and bring them to market quickly to respond to the shortages. You can find the Commerce

Commission's study at the following link: <https://comcom.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/competition-studies/market-study-into-residential-building-supplies>.

From the beginning of January to October 2022, there was a 444 per cent increase in the amount of alternative plasterboard product imported into New Zealand. A total of 4.6 million square metres of plasterboard and plaster-related products were imported into New Zealand during this period; enough to build over 9,000 homes.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours sincerely



Hon Dr Megan Woods  
**Minister for Building and Construction**