

15 October 2024

Jeeves R Ponzi
fyi-request-28050-b667d47f@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Jeeves

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00060797

Thank you for your email on 14 August 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“On 13th of August 2024, the Health Commissioner Mr Lester Levy issued the following statement:

...

Please provide, as a matter of urgency (due to the unprecedented speed of the current 'Health Reset'):

a) The information referred to which the staff member disclosed, and the Commissioner referred to, in full.

b) all correspondence (including Text messages, TEAMS messages or meetings, Emails and /or any other means) between (either received or sent) the Commissioner and/or his Deputies (or their Officers), or Health NZ Chief Executive or her Office, in any direction, which refer in any way to this disclosed information, for the period covering from Midnight Monday 12th August, and Midnight Wednesday 14th August.”

Response

In response to your request please see the attached **Appendix One**. It contains a copy of the presentation given at the GDOs and Clinical Leaders hui on 13 August 2024.

Soon after this presentation was given, Commissioner Lester Levy issued the following statement to media.

“Yesterday, a staff member presented some information to a meeting around potential cost savings in Hospital and Specialist Services.

For the avoidance of doubt, what was presented is in direct conflict with our thinking and should be dismissed.

As Commissioner, I am absolutely committed to a strong clinical frontline to drive better health outcomes for New Zealanders.

The clinical frontline is key to helping ensure faster and easier access to healthcare for people, wherever they live.

The clinical frontline will not be cut or reduced, and our plans are to strengthen it.

We do of course have a serious financial problem and as part of our reset at Health NZ we need to make sure we live within budget, but not at the expense of the clinical frontline.

These staff play a critical and valued role in lifting productivity to better respond to acute care demand and deliver more planned care. We know that's what New Zealanders expect and need us to do."

In addition, following the meeting two emails were sent to attendees on 13 and 14 August 2024, advising that the information presented was a financial model that had not been approved or decided as final.

All correspondence found to be within scope of your request, including the two emails mentioned above have been included as part of **Appendix One**.

Noting that some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- Section 9(2)(a) – in order to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.
- Section 9(2)(g)(i) – to protect the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions. Releasing the information would mean that the relevant staff will not be willing to convey their unguarded opinions in future, which is a core part of their role.

Where we have withheld information under section 9 of the Act, we have also considered any countervailing public interests in the release of this information. Health NZ does not believe that the public interests outweigh the need to withhold, in this instance.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@tewhatuora.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Danielle Coe

Manager (OIA) Government Services

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora