



OIA-229

P Robins  
fyi-request-28645-d0c065a5@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear P Robins

I have reconsidered my response to your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request of 4 October 2024, where you requested:

*“... all communications related to the independent advice you publicly referred to in order to support the proposed reduction in excise on heated tobacco products.*

*This includes any discussions within your office (including between you and your staff) and between you and your office with other ministers and ministerial offices about gathering information to support this excise reduction. It should include articles that were identified but not released and any communications that mention the six articles released.*

*For clarity, "communications" encompasses all forms of electronic and written correspondence, including but not limited to emails, text messages, messaging apps (such as WhatsApp, Signal, Slack, and Telegram), and handwritten notes (such as in notebooks, minutes or other records of meetings, post-it notes)”*

In my response I withheld discussions within my office about this body of research under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act. I have reconsidered this and while recollections within my office are unclear on the exact conversations, I can advise that staff within my office had conversations of the nature outlined below.

## **A Decision-Theoretic Public Health Framework for Heated Tobacco and Nicotine Vaping Products**

- Discussions would have touched on what policy options could be considered to further encourage the uptake of vaping and heated tobacco products by those who currently smoke.
- Ideas were exchanged on what opportunities there might be to further encourage vaping or HTP use for those who smoke and what advice the Minister may need to seek in the future if she were to consider any of the ideas further.
- These discussions were high-level and relatively given off-the-cuff

## **Patterns of Smoking and Snus Use in Sweden: Implications for Public Health**

- Discussion touched on the success of snus in Sweden and how oral nicotine products could play a role in smokers quitting in New Zealand.

- Discussion also focused on navigating the public health lobby who argue that there is no evidence oral nicotine products support quitting smoking and what options there may be to counter that argument.
- Discussed possible advice the Minister could request.

#### **What Is Accounting for the Rapid Decline in Cigarette Sales in Japan?**

- Discussed how this provides some evidence that HTPs have contributed to reduced cigarette sales, implying people were switching from cigarettes to HTPs
- Discussed limitations of the data and likely criticism of the article from the media and opposition. Discussed strategies to respond to this criticism.

#### **Nicotine without smoke and Harnessing tobacco harm reduction**

- Discussed how the report and article advocate for harm-reduction approaches to smoking cessation and strategies for using the concepts to respond to media and the Opposition.

My staff have advised that the conversations were informal in nature and took place within a busy context during the course of their normal activities. As such, no further information about the conversations is held.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by freephone at 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon Casey Costello  
**Associate Minister of Health**