



16 August 2023



Ref: OIA-2023/24-0074

Dear

**Official Information Act request relating to the development of COVID-19 alert levels in early 2020**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 30 July 2023. You requested:

*- All documentation, including meeting minutes or other communications, that show how the alert levels were developed between the 20th of February to the 25th of March 2020. This includes all feedback from government and non-government sources on the development to finalise the alert levels.*

*- Documentation, including meeting minutes or other communications, on the creation and presentation of the below linked document on mitigation and suppression <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-01/COVID-19-Mitigation-versus-suppression.pdf>*

For ease of response, I will be referring to your request as being for documentation and communications pertaining to 'alert levels' and 'mitigation strategies'.

**Information publicly available**

Official documentation relating to COVID-19 alert levels and mitigation strategies such as briefings and Cabinet papers have been proactively released by the relevant government agencies and are publicly available on the following websites:

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-programmes/special-programmes/covid-19-proactive-releases>
- Unite against COVID-19: <https://covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/proactive-releases/>

I am therefore refusing to reproduce this information in response to your request. I have made this decision in line with section 18(d) of the Act – the information requested is publicly available.

**Information to be withheld**

I have considered your request for meeting minutes and communications relating to the development of alert levels and mitigation strategies, and determined that this would include, but not be limited to, emails, texts, letters, and meeting minutes, and would involve a large range of sources. As such I am refusing this part of your request in line with section 18(f) of the Act, as to provide the requested information would require substantial collation and research.

In making my decision I have considered seeking to refine the scope of your request or applying a charge as allowed under the Act but have determined this would not support a response in this instance. I have also considered an extension but determined collation of this material would unduly impact efficient public administration.

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



Clare Ward  
**Executive Director**  
**Strategy, Governance and Engagement**