



3 November 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2023/24-0231

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request relating to COVID-19 vaccine exemptions

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 7 October 2023. Your request was addressed to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the Minister of Health, Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand), Crown Law and Worksafe New Zealand.

This response relates only to information that is held by DPMC and falls within DPMC's responsibilities. As you have addressed your request to the Minister of Health and other agencies, I refer you to their responses.

The COVID-19 Response Group was established as a business unit in DPMC in December 2020. The Group acted as a central COVID-19 response function responsible for oversight, integration, and coordination across the response system as a whole. Over the course of 2022/23 financial year, the Group's functions transferred to Te Whatu Ora and Manutū Hauora, Ministry of Health who are now responsible for the ongoing coordination of the COVID-19 response.

Part 11(l) of your request is the only part which relates to DPMC's functions and responsibilities:

***"11(l) Advertising Briefs:** All advertising briefs indicated that New Zealanders should take the vaccine to stop the transmission of COVID-19. For example, the advertising brief that resulted in this pamphlet being distributed to letterboxes around New Zealand..."*

We have interpreted this part of your request to be about briefs provided by DPMC to advertising agencies as part of the COVID-19 vaccine campaign. DPMC did not brief government agencies directly on the COVID-19 vaccine campaign. Briefing materials and approval for creative material were provided by the Ministry of Health. DPMC's role in respect to the vaccine campaign was to contract for advertising and creative services delivered through the Unite Against COVID-19 channels, the cost of which was reimbursed by the Ministry of Health.

DPMC included complementary messaging about the COVID-19 vaccine within the wider Unite Against COVID-19 campaign. We have identified one example where DPMC provided an advertising brief for the Summer Campaign 2021/2022 which included information regarding the vaccine as part of a range of health behaviours to stop the transmission of COVID-19. Please find **attached** a copy of this brief. The last page has been redacted as the information is not in scope of your request.

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

This response may 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

CREATIVE BRIEF

Project: UAC Summer Campaign
To: Clemengers
From: Sarah Wood
Date: 1 October 2021

1. Background

An important part of our defence against COVID-19 has been New Zealander's practicing the key health behaviours. These have been the key underlying messages throughout the response, outside of alert level change messages. They have evolved slightly overtime, but the biggest change is New Zealanders compliance levels, and the increased risks brought by new variants, in particular that delta variant.

When there is a community case/s we see compliance increase, however, people then slowly revert back to less compliant behaviour. We then had delta invade our shores which saw the country move to AL4, and Auckland stay there for an extended period of time. In general people understand that Delta is more transmissible and therefore holds more of a threat to the community. This has also led to the introduction of more health settings, including face coverings. In general people have been compliant, and also accepting that lockdowns/restrictions/health behaviours are the right approach. However, despite this there still has been a level of sadness and frustration.

At the same time there has been a strong drive to get the country vaccinated. The current outbreak has increased the urgency around this and numbers are looking promising. It is likely that by summer at least 80% of those eligible will be fully vaccinated.

New Zealanders have enjoyed, in a large sense, a relatively unrestricted lifestyle between the first lockdown and the most recent community resurgence. Last summer there were few restrictions; festivals went ahead, there were large gatherings and the threat of COVID-19 was not front of mind for a lot of people. The campaign approach last summer focused on asking people to keep up the health behaviours to make *Summer Unstoppable*. There was a focus on encouraging young people in high-risk settings to do the right behaviours (ie: festivals)

This year we are asking much the same of people, but the context is different. A large percentage of the population will be vaccinated, we have had a recent community resurgence that will be fresh in people's minds, the consequences of the delta variant are higher, and we are moving closer to starting to re-open New Zealand.

We are also likely to have a new response framework. Current thinking is that it will mean that lockdowns are used less (if at all) and that public health measures and behaviours alongside a high percentage of people being vaccinated would be enough. That puts the responsibility much stronger onto individuals.

We also need to change the way we talk about these behaviours, they are not a short term measure, and they will be with us for a while, potentially 3-5 years – we need to make them a routine. As the population becomes vaccinated, there is potential for people to think we are done and dusted and we can put all the health behaviours behind us – we need to position these actions as how we continue to protect ourselves as we move forward, and together with the vaccine, this will provide the best protection.

The key health behaviours are:

- Stay home if sick and get a test
- Get vaccinated (potentially a drive to get second vaccinations at this stage)
- Scan wherever you go
- Wear masks on public transport and it is recommended where physical distancing isn't possible
- Wash hands and sanitise regularly

2. Alignment with the vaccine campaign

Leading up to summer the vaccine campaign will have a strong push to get the country vaccinated. From October through to December, the focus will be on young people (under 30), encouraging them to get their first does in October, so they can be fully vaccinated by Summer (Christmas). It will be positioned around actions now will make summer possible. This health behaviour campaign will be the second part in the series of a summer-focused campaign. After the country puts in the hard work and gets vaccinated by summer, the second part of the campaign will focus on protecting the gains that have been made, doing this through consistently undertaking the health behaviours – ie: protecting summer. The common thread is summer and these two parts of the campaign need to make logical sense to the public as fitting together and telling a cohesive story.

3. Audience

All New Zealanders – However, with a skew to a younger audience, as we know they are less compliant (under 35).

4. What we know (TRA Pulse check Sept 2021)

82% of people believe that even when the majority of people are vaccinated there will be a difference in life compared to pre-covid, with 45% expecting to continue to have to undertake health behaviours

Consistent with July results, the top concerns are the effect of COVID-19 on the NZ economy, and New COVID-19 variants. But there is now more concern with long-term impacts such as

mental health, returning to normal, the welfare of low socio-economic areas, and poor access to education. Overall, we are more concerned than we have been before, with the average number of concerns at 6.4 compared to 4.9 in both July and March.

Since July, we have seen a significant uplift in Trust for the brand among:

- 35-54 years (48%, +9% from July)
- 55 years and over (45%, +6% from July)
- Females (45%, +6% from July)
- And we have seen a significant decline in Trust for Pasifika (29%, -11% from July)

We have seen significant uplifts in compliance across all measured behaviours based on people undertaking these behaviours most of the time

- Using a face mask – 78%
- Scanning – 57%
- Stay home if sick - 54%
- Getting a test if sick – 48%

However, there is a disconnect between people's willingness to comply and always complying:

- Using a face mask – 78%/26%
- Scanning – 73%/18%
- Stay home if sick – 75%/20%
- Getting a test if sick – 65%/15%

For almost all behaviours, Aucklanders are more consistently compliant than the rest of New Zealand

The non-compliant group

The 'Non-Compliant' group, more likely to be NZ European. There are no significant age skews. They feel we are going in the wrong direction and don't think lockdowns are the country's best option. They are less likely to Trust UAC and say they are not being told all the information they need to know, despite being just as engaged in information as others.

The true compliant group

The 'True Compliant' group, more likely to be 35-54 years, and live in Auckland. They are more fearful of COVID-19 and believe lockdowns should be stricter. They are also more informed and engaged on COVID messages and are more likely to "see or hear them all the time"

New Zealanders are motivated to be compliant by thinking it's the right thing to do, duty to NZ, and protecting others

- I think it's the right thing to do to follow the rules and laws 56%
- My sense of duty to New Zealand 54%
- I want to protect family, friends and whanau 53%
- The health concerns is I get COVID-19 50%

Those who are less compliant have differing motivators:

- I don't want another lockdown 58%
- I want the freedom to do what I want back 56%
- The health concerns if I got COVID-19 52%
- I think it's the right thing to follow the rules and laws 52%

People who believe that their compliance behaviours can change the outcome are more likely to comply

5. What we need

- A fully integrated campaign that includes paid advertising as an element but also content and activations.
- 2-3 creative directions that would provide the foundation for re-energising the way we talk about health behaviours
 - Find a better way to talk about Health behaviours, and a better name!
 - A foundation campaign that provides a reminder of why we need to undertake the behaviours
 - Can be used as individual call to actions as well as a combination message
- A clear transition piece to tie the 1st stage of the summer campaign (vaccines) and 2nd stage (health behaviours) together – potentially an information layer that starts near the end of the vaccine stage that brings in health behaviours.

6. Objective of the campaign

To get people actively undertaking the health behaviours

7. Single minded proposition

I need to play my part to keep myself, my whanau and my community safe to protect summer

8. Tone

- A fresh approach
- Light-hearted, not too heavy
- Recognising that as a country we have achieved a lot
- Providing a sense of hope
- Warmth and people focused
- Making connection between health behaviours and more freedoms/possibilities

9. Call to action

We have a number of CTAs, can we bundle these in some way?

- Stay home if sick and get a test

- Get vaccinated (although the majority of the country will have had at least one dose, there is still a job to ensure people get their second)
- Scan QR codes
- Wear masks on public transport, and elsewhere it is recommended (TBC)
- Wash hands and sanitise regularly

10. Mandatories

- We are a trusted and recognised brand, however we need to freshen up our how we communicate our core health behaviour messaging to ensure it doesn't become 'wallpaper'
- We need this piece to set the tone for our campaign approach going forward. We see this piece as a foundation piece that will attempt to tie UAC actions together.
- Integrated approach that is more than traditional advertisements
- Bring in Te Ao Maori lens
- Other agencies/businesses are talking about COVID-19, we want to maintain our leadership position in this space
- UAC logo and website

11. Considerations

- We need an integrated creative solution that can be applied across all channels – TV, radio, digital, social, OOH, activations, content. This should not just be a traditional ad campaign.
- Although a lot of people will have had at least their first vaccine dose, they may be a job to do to make sure they get their second dose.
- New Zealanders have just had two months of quite serious COVID-19 messaging, it would not be unexpected if people were sick of hearing about COVID-19 and being told to 'do the right thing'
- We need to provide resources as part of this campaign that resonate with, and empower businesses and organisations.
- There is a possibility that COVID will still be in the community and could be impacting people's ability to enjoy summer

12. Dependencies

Media placements will need to be managed across all campaigns to ensure we are co-ordinated in the market place

13. Timeframe

Briefing – wk:4 October

Concept delivery – 15 October

Production -

In market - early Dec through to Feb

14. Budget

Creative development and production: \$400,000

Execution (including media/activations): \$2,500,000

15. Cost Code

169-112 – UAC

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

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