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Wendy McGuinness

By email: wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org

Ref: H2024041780

Tēnā koe Wendy

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 20 May 2024 for information. Each part of your request is responded to below:

“The first few questions are points of clarification. However a few questions are follow ups, given the challenges MOH faced at the time. Three years later this information is still important, and it our hope that MOH now has the time and resources to shed more light on these critical supply questions.

1. Was QSi the domestic manufacturer that is referred to in your response to our 2020 OIA? See blue text above?

Note: The Prime Minister implied this, so this is just a point of clarification.

I can confirm the manufacturer referred to in the 2020 response was QSi.

2. Was QSi the domestic manufacturer that is referred to in the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Plan: A framework for action (p. 133).

The Prime Minister implied this, so this is just a point of clarification.

I can confirm the manufacturer referred to on page 133 of the *New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Plan: A framework for action* was QSi.

3. What date was the contract originally signed with QSI? We assume 2016 or 2017, but it would be useful to have the year clarified.

The contract between the Ministry of Health and QSi was originally signed in 2007.

4. Was QSi the domestic manufacturer who supplied the masks directly to the National Reserve Supply?

The Prime Minister implied this, so this is just a point of clarification.

I can confirm QSi was the domestic manufacturer supplying the masks directly to the National Reserve supply.

5. How many masks did the domestic manufacturer (assumingly QSi) manufacture (i) each month during 2020, and (ii) by type of mask P2 (N95) and surgical face masks? Note, the Prime Minister implied it was '80,000 masks a day'.

Please see Table 1 which indicates figures.

Table 1: Number of PPE masks manufactured domestically in 2020 as a result of Ministry contracts

2020	P2 masks	Surgical masks	Total
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Apr	978,000	504,000	1,482,000
May	140,000	1,008,000	1,148,000
Jun	840,000	924,000	1,764,000
Jul	392,000	252,000	644,000
Aug	614,000	882,000	1,496,000
Sep	308,000	2,016,000	2,324,000
Oct	532,000	1,974,000	2,506,000
Nov	672,000	1,008,000	1,680,000
Dec	1,012,000	798,000	1,810,000
TOTAL	5,488,000	9,366,000	14,854,000

6. I understand that QSi is now reduced significantly in size, but is keeping its mask production business in operation. Can you clarify that their mask production business is still in operation?

7. We also note the ownership changed in 2020. Can you clarify if the contract was reviewed at this time or updated in any way? Or was it just continued with the new owners?

8. What issues occurred in 2020 that impacted on the quality or quantity of domestic mask production in New Zealand? For example, had any of the rolls of mask material held in New Zealand as pandemic stock expired, was any of the machinery out of date (hence why new machinery was needed) etc. Please list and explain.

9. Does MOH still have a contract with QSi to provide masks in light of a pandemic? We note that QSi is still in operation (see the Companies Register) here.

10. When was the last time MOH purchased masks from QSi (i.e. month and year) and how many?

The Ministry of Health no longer holds any contract with the company formerly known as QSi and does not have knowledge about its current production. The Ministry's contract with QSi was updated following the sale of the business to the new owners, but was maintained with the same entity. In respect of Questions 8 and 10, information is withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act where the information release would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information. I have considered the countervailing public

interest in releasing information and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

13. *What is currently the minimum number of masks by type that MOH considers New Zealand should hold in stock: (i) P2 or (ii) surgical masks, does MOH aim to hold in stock? If this is under the NRS review, please advise the current situation.*

The Ministry recommends that the national reserve supply hold:

- i. 15 million N95 masks
- ii. 45 million surgical masks.

Broader questions

11. *How many businesses currently have a contract to domestically manufacture masks for the National Reserve Supply (NRS) in light of a pandemic?*

12. *Please list the names of all domestic manufacturers that the government has contracts with to supply the NRS in light of a pandemic? (For example, one business only: QSi supply both P2 and surgical masks). If two manufacturers, please name and clarify the types of masks they manufacture?*

14. *What is the minimum number of masks by type, that is (i) P2 or (ii) surgical masks, does MOH aim to have able to be produced domestically in light of a pandemic? If this is under the NRS review, please advise the current situation.*

15. *Is a regular review of each domestic manufacturer undertaken? If yes, how often and by whom (e.g. completed by MOH every 6 months)? What criteria/factors are considered as part of the review?"*

As you were advised on 12 June 2024, parts 11, 12, 14 and 15 of your request have been transferred to Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora under section 14(b)(i) of the Act. The Procurement and Supply Chain team in Health New Zealand has managed the purchase of all items in the National Reserve Supply since July 2022. Health New Zealand has communicated with the Ministry rather than sending a separate response.

Currently no businesses have a contract to domestically manufacture masks for the National Reserve Supply (NRS). Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora are required to hold 12 weeks supply of masks for pandemic preparedness and do not have any requirements for masks to be made in New Zealand.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on:

[REDACTED]

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui