

Subject: OIA 2024/28: Clarification on the Quin, the COVID-19 Group and the admin of the Royal Commission
Date: Monday, 22 July 2024 at 9:20:59 AM New Zealand Standard Time
From: Wendy McGuinness
To: [REDACTED]
CC: Arne Larsen
Attachments: 20240722 p36-37 830am CND 2nd ed[16].pdf

Kia ora,

Follow up questions to our OIA 2024/28: Clarification on the Quin, the COVID-19 Group and the admin of the Royal Commission continued, 'now includes early isolation and early simulations questions'.

As you now we are in the process of updating the second edition of our [COVID-19 Nation Dates](#) book. We have six further questions that relate to Figure 2.3 and two entries we have in the final draft of the book.

14 March 2020

Arrivals expected to self-isolate if symptoms show within 14 days

Cabinet agreed to a package of measures 'to mitigate the worst impacts and ensure the time is used to best prepare New Zealand for a COVID-19 outbreak, including stronger measures at the border'. A category system is put in place that means some travellers (New Zealanders and foreign nationals) will be expected to self-isolate if they show symptoms within 14 day of arrival.

<https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-03/cvd-20-min-0018-additional-Item-covid-19-strengthening-border-measures.pdf>

25 March 2020

New border control measures for the self-isolation

International arrivals are currently required to self-isolate for 14 days. A 25 March 2020 Cabinet minute puts in place stronger border control measures for the self-isolation of international arrivals. If arrivals do not have a self-isolation plan, they 'will be put in managed isolation in an approved facility'. In addition, every person in self-isolation will be subject to follow-up Police checks and if they are not in the agreed location, 'they will be taken into quarantine and fined.' An earlier paper from the all-of-government group included a report by New Zealand Police. On 17 March 2020, they undertook 50 monitoring visits to people in self-isolation and found two were not home, two displayed mild symptoms and one was non-compliant. By 9 April 2020, all arrivals are required to stay in an approved MIQ facility.

<https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-01/Additional-Border-Control-Measures-for-Self-Isolation-of-International-Arrivals.pdf>

<https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-01/COVID-19-All-of-Government-Plan-for-Maximising-Compliance-with-Self-Isolation.pdf>

Our questions are:

Question 1: Please provide a copy or link to CAB-2-MIN-0106 (mentioned in <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-03/cvd-20-min-0018-additional-Item-covid-19-strengthening-border-measures.pdf>)?

Question 2: Firstly, are the two entries above correct?

Question 3: From memory, there was three stages; one was isolation if you had symptoms for selected groups of arrivals (the category system), the second must have been the removal of the category system (and related to all arrivals) and the third was isolation (even if you did not have symptoms). We have the first and the third, but when was the second, and can you provide a reference or a statement that we can use as evidence for the entry. In particular, can you provide a paper or an explanation as to the categories mentioned here: <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-03/cvd-20-min-0018-additional-Item-covid-19-strengthening-border-measures.pdf>? Can you advise what the categories were on 14 March and how they changed and when this category system was disestablished? For example, were they revoked/removed when the first COVID-19 Order on 9 April 2020 or with the passing of the COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 on the 13 May 2020. Please explain the timeline in detail, and advise when the system was disestablished. We have not been able to find any explanation.

Question 4: Can you advise who are the members of the ‘all-of-government group’ in February and March? Should they be referred to as the ‘COVID-19 all-of-government group’. I noted that the early papers (e.g. before 1 April 2020), that ‘the Quin’ is not mentioned as author, but that the ‘all-of-government group’ is mentioned. See for example, this paper of 18 March 2020, found here https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-01/COVID-19_-_All-of-Government-Plan-for-Maximising-Compliance-with-Self-Isolation.pdf.

Question 5: Is there another group that needs to appear on our diagram, Figure 2.3, attached? What was the group called and when did they meet? I have attached the updated diagram to make clear what we are missing and want to understand.

Question 6: We would like to create a new entry for 5 March 2020. We note that three simulation exercises carried out to test response planning. Can you tell us more about this – *who* instigated it (was it Ministers?), *who* was involved (numbers and organisations), *what* was the nature of the exercise, *how* was it conducted, *where* was it held, *what* was the outcome and *when* it was carried out (e.g. over half-a-day). We will turn your answers into a paragraph for the entry.

The only information we could find on this <https://oag.parliament.nz/2022/covid-19/docs/all-of-govt-response-to-covid.pdf>, pp. 39, 41. It states: ‘From early March 2020, DPMC’s National Security Group organised a series of simulation exercises to test response arrangements under various scenarios (including worst case outbreaks) to help identify gaps in planning.’

Please get back to me if you have any points of clarification.

Many thanks,

Wendy

From: Wendy McGuinness <wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org>

Date: Thursday, 18 July 2024 at 6:51 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Arne Larsen <al@mcguinnessinstitute.org>, Patrick Shonakan <ps@mcguinnessinstitute.org>

Subject: OIA 2024/28: Clarification on the Quin, the COVID-19 Group and the admin of the Royal Commission

Kia ora,

Our OIA 2024/28: Clarification on the Quin, the COVID-19 Group and the admin of the Royal Commission

Thank you for acknowledging our OIA 2024/19. The following request is being treated as a new OIA by the McGuinness Institute, but you might like to treat it as a further request to our original OIA for your records.

As you now we are in the process of updating the second edition of our [COVID-19 Nation Dates](#) book. We have seven further questions:

Question 1: Can you confirm that the COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group, is also known as the COVID-19 Group, and/or alternatively CARG? It would be great to clarify that they are all the same organisation. (see note 2 in Attachment 1)

Question 2: Can you explain the difference between (a) the COVID-19 Group being managed by DPMC, but not being a business unit of DPMC, from 1 July 2020 to 2 December 2020 and (b) being a business unit of DPMC, from 2 December 2020? Is there a better way to describe (a) than we have done here?

FYI: We note that on your timeline (see [here](#)) 1 July 2020 is the date which the COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group (the COVID-19 Group) was established, and this is supported by the 2022 OAG report ([here](#)) which states that on 1 July 2020 the COVID-19 Group was established in DPMC. However, on your website ([here](#)) you also say in December 2020 that the COVID-19 Group was established 'as a business unit of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)'.

Question 3: Can you confirm if the dates in the table below are accurate and if possible, provide the disestablishment date of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group [see ?]? If you have any corrections or comments please add them to column 3 of the table below. These are the dates we have included in Figure 2.3, see Attachment 1 (draft pages from our book). Please advise if our figure and text is incomplete or inaccurate in any way. We hope to go to print in early August.

Event	Established	Disestablished	DPMC Comments
COVID-19 Ministerial Group Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters (the COVID-19 Ministerial Group)	19 Mar 2020	[?]	
NCMC established	1 Apr 2020	30 Jun 2020	
COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group (COVID-19 Group) under DPMC established	1 Jul 2020		
COVID-19 Group confirmed as business unit within DPMC (COVID-19 Group)	2 Dec 2020		
System response functions from COVID-19 Group move to MOH	NA	31 Oct 2022	
Policy and strategy functions from DPMC's COVID-19 move to Ministry of Health; COVID-19 Group comes to an end	NA	29 Mar 2023	

Question 4: We would appreciate more clarity over the mention of ‘workstreams’ in your timeline. Your timeline, 18 Mar 2020 mentions ‘First National Action Plan issued and AoG workstreams initiated’(see [here](#)). What do these relate to?

FYI: We note that the 2022 OAG report ([here](#)) mentions ‘The Operations Command Centre had up to 28 workstreams. Some were set up in line with Pandemic Plan guidance, and others were created from scratch. Workstreams changed depending on what was needed.’ Can you also name the 28 workstreams mentioned in the OAG report?

Question 5: We have found an inconsistency, and wondered if you could shed any light on this. An historical version of your COVID-19 Group website reference (as at October 2020, see bottom para of first page 1 out of 4, see PDF [here](#)) stated that the the COVID-19 Group was ‘**mandated** [from 1 July 2020] to coordinate, and where necessary lead, the All-of-Government response to the ongoing pandemic’. However, the OAG report *Co-ordination of the all-of-government response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020* (see page 52 [here](#)) states that ‘Cabinet **did not officially** confirm the COVID-19 Group’s role to co-ordinate and lead the response until December 2020.’ Can you advise which is correct? Was this because 2 December 2020 was the date that DPMC was formally funded to lead this work?

Question 6: I have included an image page (and quote) that we are hoping to describe the members of the Quin (see Attachment 2). Do you have any issues with this page and/or do you have a preferred photo of the five members (rather than the four members). Is the description appropriate?

Question 7: We note that DPMC is hosting the all-of-government function to co-ordinate input to the Royal Commission Inquiry (rather than DIA). Can you explain the reason for this? From our experience it is always DIA that administers and coordinates responses to Royal Commissions. Please explain.

If you have any questions or points of clarification, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Ngā mihi,
Wendy

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