

Reference: 20200182



TE TAI ŌHANGA  
THE TREASURY

5 August 2020



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 13 May 2020. You requested:

*“3. Was a cost-benefit analysis undertaken of a range of options for if/when New Zealand was to be moved out of Level 4?*

*3.a. If yes, could these options be described in detail? We would appreciate a soft copy of the detailed cost-benefit analysis.*

*3.b. If no, was this due to timing issues? Please explain.”*

As you are aware, on 10 June 2020, I wrote to inform you that some of the information within the scope of your request would be covered by several planned proactive releases. I also extended the timeframe to respond to the remainder of your request by an additional 40 days to 6 August 2020.

I am now addressing the remainder of your request. The information you requested on Treasury’s advice on Alert Levels is covered under a separate OIA request, which will soon be published on the Treasury website. The link to where this information will be released is provided in the table below (item 3). I anticipate this item to be published by the end of August 2020.

In response to your questions, no cost-benefit analysis was undertaken to inform the decision to move out of Level 4. The decision to adopt an Elimination Strategy and Alert Levels approach happened very early in the response to COVID-19. In advising on Alert Levels, the Treasury was working with ambiguity and uncertainty and used scenario-based advice to inform decision-making as the response to COVID-19 developed. Our approach to estimating the impacts of the Alert Levels looked at the relative activity loss from different Alert Level settings compared with pre-COVID-19 GDP.

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The need for a swift response, and one that traversed an extensive range of measures across Government, meant there was little time for traditional consultation and, in order to respond swiftly, advice and analysis had to be broad with wide coverage.

### Information Publicly Available

The following information is covered by your request and is or will soon be publicly available on the COVID-19 and Treasury website:

Item	Document Description	Website Address
1.	Proactive release	<a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/legislation-and-key-documents/proactive-release/">https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/legislation-and-key-documents/proactive-release/</a>
2.	COVID-19 information releases	<a href="https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/new-zealand-economy/covid-19-economic-response/information-releases">https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/new-zealand-economy/covid-19-economic-response/information-releases</a>
3.	The cost and benefits of different strategies to handle the spread of Covid-19	Will soon be published: <a href="https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/other-official-information/responses-official-information-act-requests">https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/other-official-information/responses-official-information-act-requests</a>

Accordingly, I have refused your request for the documents listed in the above table under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act:

- the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Treasury website.

This reply addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision.

Yours sincerely



Geraldine Treacher  
Manager, COVID Strategy and Governance