



Our ref: F21/1374

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[REDACTED]

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Maher

**NOTICE OF DECISION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

I refer to your application made pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) cited below and received by the department on 22 July 2021:

- "1. Any peer reviewed scientific reports showing that wearing masks stops the transmission of the Corona virus.*
- 2. Any peer reviewed scientific reports showing that lockdowns stop the transmission of the Corona virus.*
- 3. Any peer reviewed scientific reports that show that border closures stop the transmission of the virus.*
- 4. Any peer reviewed scientific papers or reports or evidence that show the PCR test can detect a live infection.*
- 5. Any peer reviewed scientific papers or reports or evidence that show the PCR test can detect what type of RNA virus has been detected.*
- 6. Copies of any directives from the Victoria Department of Health to practitioners about using PCR tests.*
- 7. Copies of any written directives from the Victoria Department of Health to practitioners advising at what amplification the PCR test is to be run at.*
- 8. Copies of all Directives or recommendations from the World Health Organization about the use of the PCR test."*

Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)

The Act establishes a general right of access to documents held by the department. To protect essential public interests and the private and business affairs of individuals, the right of access does not apply to a document identified in the Act as exempt.

Documents

Items 1 to 5

In relation to items 1 to 5 of your request, the department conducted a thorough and diligent search and located documents that are relevant to your request. The department located 11 pages of documents, comprising a report and briefing from the Burnet Institute.

I assessed the documents in accordance with the Act and have decided to grant access in full to the documents.

I note that the department is a government agency and does not conduct scientific studies or laboratory testing for the SARS-CoV-2 in a laboratory. While the department is not the custodian of the scientific studies establishing the existence of SARS-CoV-2, this research has informed the Victorian Government's response to the pandemic. You can find those scientific studies in the public domain.

Items 6 and 7

In relation to items 6 and 7 of your request, I note that the department has published publicly available testing criteria and guidance for health services and professionals; this information can be found here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/assessment-and-testing-criteria-coronavirus-covid-19#key-resources>

Diagnostic assays using reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) are conducted by testing laboratories throughout Victoria and Australia. For more information, please see: [PHLN guidance on laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 \(the virus that causes COVID-19\) | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

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The testing guidance provided by the World Health Organisation is also publicly available, and can be found by searching their website here: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

Complaint rights

You can complain to the Office of the Information Commissioner if you are dissatisfied with the way in which the request has been managed or in situations where documents do not exist or cannot be located.

The enclosed fact sheet contains more information about this process.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ghobrial

Team Leader, Freedom of Information

22 / 10 / 2021

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1. Fact Sheet – Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner – Complaints