

**Follow up Written Evidence Submitted by**  
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**(DDA0069)**

**Percentage of New Zealanders, and Māori, that opt to share their data for commercial research**

The Committee was specifically interested to know how New Zealanders' consent is obtained if their health data is going to be shared with commercial entities, and – if there is an option for them not to share health data with commercial entities – what proportion of New Zealanders generally, and of Māori, choose not to share their data (Q188-9, Q193, and Q195-6 refer).

We are still in the process of following up this request with New Zealand's Ministry of Health and will be in touch when more information is available.

**Guidance on algorithms and decision-making – the Algorithm Charter Aotearoa**

The Committee was interested in the role of AI in analysing data in New Zealand, and in guidance New Zealand has produced on AI – specifically the guidance on algorithms and decision-making set out in the Algorithm Charter Aotearoa (Q208 and Q209 refer).

- Stats NZ introduced an Algorithm Charter in 2020 in its capacity as Government Chief Data Steward to provide guidance to public sector agencies on the safe and appropriate use of algorithms. So far 28 agencies are signatories to the Charter. The Charter can be viewed at: [https://data.govt.nz/assets/data-ethics/algorithm/Algorithm-Charter-2020\\_Final-English-1.pdf](https://data.govt.nz/assets/data-ethics/algorithm/Algorithm-Charter-2020_Final-English-1.pdf)
- Signatories to the Charter assess their algorithm decisions using a risk matrix that identifies the likelihood and magnitude of potential risks – eg to privacy and of bias. Signatories also make a public commitment to uphold principles relating to transparency; public engagement; privacy, ethics and human rights; data quality; and human oversight.
- New Zealand's Ministry of Health is a signatory to the Charter and provides information on its commitment to the Charter and its use of algorithms on its website at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/digital-health/digital-health-sector-architecture-standards-and-governance/algorithm-charter>
- To date, the Charter has increased awareness of algorithm use across government. Some signatory agencies, such as the larger producers and users of data, have well established algorithm use, mature internal resource capabilities, and have successfully embedded many aspects of the Charter into their practices. Other signatory agencies have less-established data and algorithm capabilities and are now thinking more deeply about how their algorithms may impact individuals or communities.
- A review of the Charter has been undertaken a year into its implementation, to assess how its implementation is going and identify areas for further support – Stats NZ is currently assessing the findings and recommendations of that review.

## Data available during the pandemic – New Zealand’s COVID-19 data portal

The Committee was interested in how widely data was made available, and in what format, during the COVID-19 pandemic and was interested in New Zealand’s COVID-19 data portal (Q198 and Q199 refer).

- Statistics New Zealand established the COVID-19 data portal in April 2020 to respond to needs for an accessible source of topical, timely, and high-frequency data to support the COVID-19 response. The portal has an experimental status as it prioritises providing speed and access over accuracy and data validation. The portal can be accessed at: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/experimental/covid-19-data-portal>
- While the portal originated as a way to respond to the data needs of government agencies, and help them respond to information requests from outside the public sector, it was determined that much of the data supporting government decision-making should also be made available to the public in the interests of transparency and openness
- The hosting of public and private sector data side by side on the portal was a first for Stats NZ. Stats NZ worked at speed to negotiate data from private sector sources for the portal (eg daily broadband use from internet providers, weekly fuel consumption data from fuel retailers)
- Following its launch, the Portal has increasingly serviced media enquiries, financial institutions, academics, and aided New Zealand’s National Crisis Management Centre Operations Command Centre monitoring and reporting
- As a result of the suite of information sourced and made available via the Portal, the Treasury, Reserve Bank, and Stats NZ have identified and developed a high frequency index on economic activity – <https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators/new-zealand-activity-index>
- The COVID-19 data portal now hosts over 120 indicators and some 900 charts and has had over 160,000 visits in two years. It has forged a unique base of customers established from across New Zealand and overseas
- Stats NZ also made available a version of the code used to develop the COVID-19 data portal via Github so interested users could access and adopt for their own purposes

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