

ATTACHMENT A

Schedule - FOI 2564

Document no.	Date	Number of pages	Description	Decision on access ¹	Exemption
1	8 June 2021	2	MS21-000984 Letter from Prime Minister Scott Morrison to Lieutenant General Frewen	RE	section 47F - part
2	4 June 2021	2	Message from the Secretary: National COVID-19 Vaccination Taskforce	RI	section 22 - part

¹ E = Exempt, R = Release, RI = Release with irrelevant information removed, RE = Release with exempt information removed.

OFFICIAL



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: MS21-000984

8 JUN 2021

Lieutenant General John Frewen DSC AM
Defence COVID-19 Taskforce
Department of Defence
RUSSELL ACT 2600

Dear Lieutenant General Frewen

As you are aware, the Government is moving into a new phase in the response to the COVID pandemic and is stepping up its vaccine rollout program.

As part of this new phase, I am asking that you take on the role of Co-ordinator General of the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce.

As Co-ordinator General, you will have direct operational control of all relevant assets and resources across all Commonwealth government departments and agencies engaged in the direction and implementation of the national COVID vaccination program. Among other things, you will be responsible for communication around the vaccine rollout, engagement with states and territories, distribution and delivery of vaccines, engagement with health providers including hospitals, GPs, Aboriginal Health Services and pharmacies, and engagement with key community stakeholders, business groups, and unions.

In performing these functions, you will be responsible directly to me and the Minister for Health. Accordingly, communications should be jointly addressed to both of us and coordination should occur with both of our offices simultaneously. I expect that you will attend meetings of the National Cabinet to provide briefings to First Ministers. I also expect that you will engage with the First Secretaries Group through its Chair Phil Gaetjens, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to ensure proper co-ordination with the states and territories.

The goals of the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce are to ensure public confidence in the vaccine rollout and ensure as many Australians are vaccinated as early as possible within the TGA guidelines and available vaccine supply. Achievement of these goals will also ensure Australia's economy is well-supported and our international borders are opened as quickly as possible. My expectation is that a direct command and control structure, with you as Co-ordinator General, will ensure that these goals are met.

I have discussed this matter with the Chief of the Defence Force, and I have his agreement to these arrangements. I understand the necessary measures will be put in place within the Australian Defence Force to give effect to this tasking.

I expect that the necessary resources and assets will be put at your disposal by the Australian Public Service. I ask that you work closely with both the Secretary of the Department of Health, Dr Brendan Murphy, and Australian Public Service Commissioner, Peter Woolcott AO, to ensure that you have the support you require.

I have copied this letter to the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, the Minister for Defence, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, the Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, Secretary of the Department of Health, Dr Brendan Murphy and Australian Public Service Commissioner, Peter Woolcott AO. I have also copied this letter to members of the National Security Committee, and members of the Secretaries Committee on National Security.

Yours sincerely

s 47F

SCOTT MORRISON

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From: [MURPHY, Brendan](#)
To: s 22
Cc:
Subject: Message from Brendan: National COVID-19 Vaccination Taskforce [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 4 June 2021 6:49:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



Dear Colleagues,

As announced by the Prime Minister today, Lieutenant General John Frewen will step into the role of head of the National COVID-19 Vaccination Taskforce. This is welcome news given Caroline Edwards will be leaving us soon.

Lieutenant General Frewen's focus will be ensuring as many Australians as possible are vaccinated as early as possible within available vaccine supplies. He will have direct operational control over the direction and activities of the different Commonwealth agencies involved in the National Vaccination Program. A key focus will be on an integrated whole of government approach as the rollout continues to accelerate with increased vaccine supplies in the second half of this year.

The operational arrangements of our Vaccine Divisions will continue with the benefit of Lieutenant General Frewen's additional oversight.

A number of us have worked closely with Lieutenant General Frewen as he has led the Australian Defence Force's COVID-19 activities over the last year.

Caroline and I warmly welcome Lieutenant General Frewen's appointment. We know our COVID-19 vaccination team across the department will benefit from his proven leadership. The Executive and I look forward to working very closely with him.

His role will complement the work of Commodore Eric Young and his team who joined us from Defence earlier in the year to help manage the logistics of the rollout and coordinating supply and distribution of vaccines.

As we enter the busiest phase of the vaccine rollout, we are now taking the next step up in our efforts to ensure everyone in Australia can access a vaccination.

I know Lieutenant General Frewen very well and he will add great value to the work we are doing. He is an excellent leader and we have worked really well together in the past. He is incredibly respectful of what we are doing here at Health – and neither he nor I want to change anything on the ground.

Lieutenant General Frewen's appointment was announced by the Prime Minister Scott Morrison after National Cabinet met today.

As part of that announcement, the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, paid tribute to Caroline's contribution to the COVID-19 response, describing her as 'one of the great servants of the nation'.

Finally, I'd like to again thank the extraordinary and remarkable team delivering outstanding work right across the Department. I want to echo Minister Hunt's comments from earlier today, 'it is unbelievable the service and the pressure these people, these genuine public servants, have given'.

I could not be more proud to work with all of you.

Regards,
Brendan