



MP for Palmerston North

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety Deputy Leader of the House

Minister of Immigration

Minister for ACC

23 JAN 2020

Junlong

fyi-request-11788-d74b8387@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Junlong,

I refer to your email received by my office on 04 December 2019, in which you request the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1. Is there any plan in discussion inside Cabinet/INZ to replace / optimise current internal priority criteria to make it fairer for most of applications instead of sacrificing their interest? Personally I suggest there should be at least a maximum waiting time for applications, beyond which it should be prioritised to allocate Case Officers to or speed up the processing.*
- 2. Will there be any changes adding to deleting on some of the internal priority criteria?*
- 3. From Migration Data Explorer, number of Business/Skilled Apps on Hand has been increasing dramatically from July 2018, which had never been seen in history. And it is expected to be over 40,000 apps on hand by the end of 2020. What will Government/INZ do to mitigate this?*
- 4. How many Case Officers are dedicated to SMC at the moment, and how many more INZ will be hiring for it?*

In relation to questions 1, 2, and 3, I am refusing your request under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain the constitutional conventions which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers and officials. Management options for the New Zealand Residence Programme (which will include consideration of the number of Skilled Migrant Category applications that are queued) are currently under active consideration.

In relation to question 4, Immigration New Zealand has advised me that as at 19 December 2019, there were 78 immigration officers working in the Skilled Migrant Category team. Immigration Officers are continually recruited to manage staff attrition. However, I am

advised that Immigration New Zealand intends to maintain the current establishment until decisions are made on management of the New Zealand Residence Programme.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision to withhold material from the released information. The relevant contact details are as follows:

Office of the Ombudsman

PO Box 10152

WELLINGTON 6143

Ph 0800 802 602

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Yours sincerely



Hon Iain Lees-Galloway
Minister of Immigration