



21 August 2020

A KS

By email: fyi-request-13227-0d74f0f5@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021-0059

Dear A KS

Thank you for your email of 3 July 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

*1: The EOI selection for the parents residency visa was scheduled to start in May 2020 but the selection process was suspended. Please tell by when is it expected to resume?*

*2: Since March 1 2020 --Any advice, recommendations, briefings, documents, emails, aide memoir, and/or cabinet papers, provided by MBIE or INZ to the Hon. Minister of Immigration and/or the Minister's office in regards to the Parents residency visa . Please provide complete documents not just the list of documents. If complete documents cannot be shared please provide the list of the titles.*

*3: Regarding parents residency visa, Is MBIE/INZ currently working on any advice/recommendation or any work which is yet to be submitted to Hon. Minister of Immigration/Ministry?. For Point 3, If the answer is yes and it is possible under law, please provide the basic info (like what the work is about, title etc. ) as I can understand it may still be a work in progress and hence, documents cannot be shared by MBIE yet.*

#### **Our response**

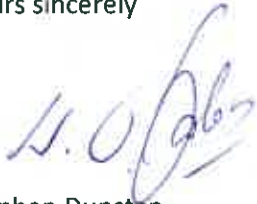
1. No decisions have been made about when the Expression of Interest (EOI) selection for Parent Resident Visa will resume.
2. Documents identified within scope of your request are outlined in the Appendix and copies of these are attached to this letter. The table in the Appendix also lists the specific grounds under which some information has been withheld. Where information has been withheld from a document, the grounds are also noted in the document itself.
3. Policy changes were made to the Parent Resident Visa in February 2020. The papers and supporting advice considered by Cabinet in relation to the changes made were proactively published in November 2019 and can be found on the Ministry website here: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/immigration/release-of-immigration-information/>, under the heading 'Changes to the Parent Resident Visa'. No further policy changes are being considered in relation to the Parent Resident Visa at this point in time.

Immigration New Zealand is not currently preparing any advice to the Minister of Immigration to restart the Parent Category EOI selection but this will be considered in due course.

I trust you find the information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Anna McLachlan, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at [Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Stephen Dunstan  
General Manager  
Enablement  
Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

## Appendix

No	Paper	Decision
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emails of various dates</li><li>• Briefing dated 3 April 3 2020 (Talking Points)</li><li>• Weekly reports (dated 28 May 2020 and 18 June 2020)</li></ul>	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.
2	Briefing dated 31 March 2020 (COVID-19 response: Deferral of certain scheme opening dates and temporary suspension of EOI selections)	Refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information is publicly available at: <a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release/COVID-19-response-Deferral-of-certain-scheme-opening-dates-and-temporary-suspension-of-EOI-selections.pdf">https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/proactive-release/COVID-19-response-Deferral-of-certain-scheme-opening-dates-and-temporary-suspension-of-EOI-selections.pdf</a>

**Anna McLachlan**

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**From:** Jason Austin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 March 2020 1:02 p.m.  
**To:** Craig Forbes; Meegan Sorenson [Parliament]  
**Cc:** Lariza Balina  
**Subject:** Briefing for consideration today [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi both,

Just a heads up that we'll be sending over a briefing today (pending final Legal review underway now) that covers the postponement of various schemes/ballots as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We think these should be postponed for a number of reasons, including INZ processing capacity, health risks to applicants and staff, and in some cases fairness to applicants who won't be able to apply in time or use their visa.

It's proposed that the following are temporarily postponed:

- [redacted] Out of scope
- Out of scope
- Parent category EOI draws
- [redacted] Out of scope

[redacted] Out of scope Can you please shout out if there's anything in particular we can provide to support this or any time when the Minister specifically isn't available?

Will provide the final briefing soon, happy to answer any questions.

Thanks

Jason

**Jason Austin**  
Team Leader – Operational Policy  
Enablement, Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz | Telephone: [redacted] 9(2)(a) | Mobile [redacted] 9(2)(a)

**COVID-19 availability:**

*I'm available 9am-6pm weekdays and will check emails again at 8pm.  
For anything urgent or outside regular hours, contact me on my work phone (call or Signal).  
For anything urgent urgent, contact me on my personal phone (call or Signal).*

**Anna McLachlan**

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**From:** Jason Austin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 April 2020 10:56 a.m.  
**To:** Craig Forbes; Meegan Sorenson [Parliament]  
**Cc:** Alejandra Mercado; Stephen Dunstan; Stephanie Greathead; Sian Roguski; Lariza Balina; Nicola Wright; Marc Piercey; Senta Jehle  
**Subject:** Deferral of [REDACTED] Out of scope Parent EOI draws [IN-CONFIDENCE]  
**Attachments:** Deferral of certain schemes, registrations and EOI draws.pdf; Deferral of certain schemes, registrations and EOI draws.docx

Hi Craig,

As signalled the other day, please find attached a briefing for the Minister which seeks agreement to temporarily defer:

- [REDACTED] Out of scope
- [REDACTED] Out of scope
- Parent Category expression of interest selection scheduled for late May until further notice; and
- [REDACTED] Out of scope

We're putting together a comms plan now, but in the meantime until there is agreement (and the Minister advises his colleagues, if required) we'll develop reactive messages if anyone gets in touch to ask about these. Out of scope

Any questions, feel free to get in touch.

Thanks

Jason

**Jason Austin**

Team Leader – Operational Policy  
Enablement, Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

[Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz) | Telephone: [REDACTED] 9(2)(ā) | Mobile [REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

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*I'm available 9am-6pm weekdays and will check emails again at 8pm.*

*For anything urgent or outside regular hours, contact me on my work phone (call or Signal).*

*For anything urgent urgent, contact me on my personal phone (call or Signal).*

**Anna McLachlan**

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**From:** Jason Austin  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 April 2020 2:56 p.m.  
**To:** Craig Forbes  
**Cc:** Alejandra Mercado; Nicola Wright  
**Subject:** Talking points (002).docx [IN-CONFIDENCE]  
**Attachments:** Talking points (002).docx

Hi Craig,

Talking points attached, as discussed. Let me know if any questions.

Jason

**Jason Austin**  
Team Leader – Operational Policy  
Enablement, Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

[Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz) | Telephone: 9(2)(a) | Mobile: 9(2)(a)

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## BRIEFING

Talking points to support oral item to Cabinet regarding deferral of certain visa schemes, registrations and EOI draws

Date:	3 April 2020	Priority:	High
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway Minister of Immigration	Note that you are taking an oral item on the deferral of certain visa schemes, ballots and EOI draws to Cabinet on Monday 6 April  Note that talking points summarising the deferrals and the rationale for them are attached	6 April 2020
Hon Poto Williams Associate Minister of Immigration	Copy attached for your information	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Alejandra Mercado	Manager Operational Policy, Enablement	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	✓
Jason Austin	Team Leader, Operational Policy	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted or informed

Minister's office to complete:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved             | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted                | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn           |

Comments



## BRIEFING

### Talking points to support oral item to Cabinet regarding deferral of certain visa schemes, registrations and EOI draws

Date:	3 April 2020	Priority:	High
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	

#### Purpose

You agreed on 31 March 2020 to inform Cabinet as an oral item that certain visa categories and expression of interest draws will be deferred as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic [BR 2804 19-20 refers].

Details of the deferral and talking points are attached to support that discussion.

#### Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) recommends that you:

- a **Note** that you agreed on 31 March 2020 to inform Cabinet as an oral item that certain visa categories and expression of interest draws will be deferred as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic

*Noted*

- b **Note** the talking points in Annex One provided to support oral discussion at Cabinet on Monday 6 April 2020

*Noted*

- c **Note** that INZ and MFAT are preparing a communications plan for approval, to inform other countries of the decision

*Noted*

Stephen Dunstan  
General Manager  
Enablement  
Immigration New Zealand, MBIE

...3.. / ..4.... / ..20....

Hon Iain Lees-Galloway  
Minister of Immigration



## Talking points on the decision to defer the opening of certain visa categories and EOI selections

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1. You received a briefing on Tuesday 31 March 2020, detailing the rationale for deferring the visa schemes, ballots and EOI. The rationale has administrative, fairness and technical aspects to it. Many of the issues are applicable to all items being deferred, but some of it is category-specific.
2. You agreed on 31 March 2020 that certain visa categories and expression of interest draws will be deferred as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic [BR 2804 19-20 refers]. You agreed to defer:
  - i. [REDACTED] Out of scope [REDACTED]
  - ii. [REDACTED] Out of scope [REDACTED]
  - iii. Draws from the pool of those who have expressed interest under the [REDACTED] and Parent categories, until further notice [REDACTED]
3. You also agreed to inform Cabinet of the above decisions. You will be leading an oral item at Cabinet on Monday 6 April 2020.
4. Annex One provides talking points to support you in this discussion.

### Next steps

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5. A communications plan is being prepared by INZ and MFAT officials for approval, which will guide how other countries are informed of the decision. Further communication with the public will take place after other countries are informed.
6. Officials will provide further updated advice on the [REDACTED] Out of scope [REDACTED] and the selection of EOIs from the Parent and [REDACTED] Out of scope [REDACTED] category pools once New Zealand returns to Alert Level 2 or lower, or within the next six months.

### Annexes

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Annex One: Talking points

## Annex One: Talking points

### Decisions and high level rationale

- The COVID-19 is a global crisis and is placing challenges on the ability for Immigration New Zealand (INZ) to receive and process visas.
- There are certain processes that we can defer operationally without significant foreign affairs impacts:
  - [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]
  - [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]
  - draws from the pool of those who have expressed interest under the [Redacted] and Parent categories, until further notice.
- These changes will:
  - Enable Immigration New Zealand to focus available resources towards urgent COVID-19 activities
  - Better manage expectations from the public at a time where Immigration New Zealand's capacity is limited due to office closures
  - Be fairer to applicants to ensure that they are able to obtain the required documents within the timeframes required
- [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]  
[Redacted]
  - [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]
- [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]  
[Redacted]
  - [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted]
- The [Redacted] Out of scope [Redacted] and Parent Category EOI selections will temporarily be deferred because:
  - While INZ offices are closed, there is no operational resource to process and assess EOIs

- Applicants may have difficulty in obtaining the required documents and evidence to submit a completed application within four months of being invited to apply.
- These are temporary deferrals. In the case of [redacted] and Parent category EOI draws, and [redacted] Out of scope these can be restarted with relative ease when the operating environment changes. [redacted] Out of scope [redacted].
- This will not impact the ability to grant visas for essential workers which New Zealand needs for the COVID-19 response. There are mechanisms in place for this.

Immigration New Zealand's operating environment

- All Immigration New Zealand (INZ) offices are currently closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some staff in New Zealand are processing urgent COVID-19 related requests. These are being prioritised based on the direction of government (e.g. health workers) and are intended only for exceptional cases.
- Many offshore providers are also closed, for example the visa application centres in Fiji, operated by TT Services, are closed.
- Many organisations which provide material required to make visa applications, such as medical centres, educational institutions, Justices of the Peace, and other government departments are also closed or operating with limited capacity.
- New Zealand's border remains closed to most travellers, and there are a very limited number of flights daily.
- The deferrals are not intended to be permanent, but to be responsive as the COVID-19 situation develops. In the case of [redacted] and Parent category EOI draws, and [redacted] Out of scope [redacted], these can be restarted with relative ease once a decision is made to do so.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade are aware of the decision to defer and will provide a Formal Message to relevant posts.

[redacted] Out of scope [redacted]

[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

[redacted]  
[redacted]



Out of scope and Parent category expression of interest draws

- Out of scope

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
- The Parent category was recently re-opened allows up to 1000 people to be granted residence annually, subject to an Expression of Interest process. INZ began accepting EOIs under the new policy on 24 February 2020. The first draw from the Parent category pool of EOIs was scheduled to take place in late May.
- I have deferred until further notice EOI selections for both categories. While INZ offices are closed, there is no operational resource to process and assess EOIs. Also, out of a matter of fairness for applicants who must submit a complete application within four months of being invited to apply. They must provide required documents, including medical and police certificates, and evidence to support the points claimed in the EOI such as a job offer, record of qualifications, all of which may be difficult to obtain under the current circumstances.
- While EOI selections are on hold, migrants can continue to obtain temporary work visas. Additionally, there is a formal process in place for those who are offshore and who may have a critical reason to enter New Zealand.
- I acknowledge that there's a lot of interest in EOI selections and we will reassess when EOI selections can take place as the COVID-19 situation develops. When EOI selections can continue will be determined by operational considerations once onshore offices reopen.
- INZ will notify the market by updating the INZ website and communicating directly with key stakeholders. Emails will also be sent directly to those with a Parent Category EOI in the pool.
- EOI selections can be restarted relatively easily, so can be very responsive to the changing COVID-19 situation.
- Visas can still be granted to those essential workers which New Zealand needs for the COVID-19 response. There are mechanisms in place for this and the deferral of EOI selections does not affect New Zealand's immediate access to skills required for the COVID-19 response, as Out of scope and residence is not the appropriate mechanism for these immediate responses.

**Anna McLachlan**

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**From:** Jason Austin  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 April 2020 3:01 p.m.  
**To:** Craig Forbes  
**Subject:** RE: Talking points (002).docx [IN-CONFIDENCE]  
**Attachments:** Talking points for deferrals.pdf

And PDF version FYI

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**From:** Jason Austin  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 April 2020 2:56 PM  
**To:** Craig Forbes <[Craig.Forbes@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Craig.Forbes@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Alejandra Mercado <[Alejandra.Mercado@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Alejandra.Mercado@mbie.govt.nz)>; Nicola Wright <[Nicola.Wright@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Nicola.Wright@mbie.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** Talking points (002).docx [IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Craig,

Talking points attached, as discussed. Let me know if any questions.

Jason

**Jason Austin**  
Team Leader – Operational Policy  
Enablement, Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

[Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Jason.Austin@mbie.govt.nz) | Telephone [REDACTED] | Mobile [REDACTED]

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**Weekly Report to the Minister of Immigration and  
Associate Minister of Immigration**  
For the period from 21 to 27 May 2020

<b>Date:</b>	28 May 2020	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security classification:</b>	In confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	3465 19-20

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway Minister of Immigration	Discuss at the next immigration portfolio meeting	N/A
Hon Poto Williams Associate Minister of Immigration	For information	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	
Greg Patchell	Deputy Chief Executive	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)
Stephen Dunstan	General Manager Enablement	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)

Stephen Dunstan  
General Manager  
Enablement  
Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Pages 1 - 3 have been removed as they are out of scope

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# Out of scope

## 5. MEDIA UPDATE AND UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

### 5.1. Media update

Marc Piercey  
Manager

Engagement and Communications INZ

9(2)(a) or 9(2)(a)

Out of scope

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Information on the INZ website continues to be regularly updated and key stakeholders are being informed of latest developments via a weekly email and an ongoing series of webinars. The team has also dealt with media queries about the number of Expressions of Interest since the Parent Category reopened and **Out of scope**.

# Out of scope

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**Weekly Report to the Minister of Immigration and  
Associate Minister of Immigration**  
For the period from 11 to 17 June 2020

Date:	18 June 2020	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In confidence	Tracking number:	3746 19-20

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway Minister of Immigration	Discuss at the next immigration portfolio meeting	N/A
Hon Poto Williams Associate Minister of Immigration	For information	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	
Greg Patchell	Deputy Chief Executive	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)
Stephen Dunstan	General Manager Enablement	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)
Siân Roguski	Manager Immigration Policy	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)

Stephen Dunstan  
General Manager  
Enablement  
Immigration New Zealand  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

# Out of scope

### 3. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Out of scope

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Out of scope

### 3.2. Quota/Capped Immigration Schemes

Fiona Whiteridge  
General Manager  
Refugee and Migrant Services  
9(2)(a)

Nicola Hogg  
General Manager  
Border & Visa Operations  
9(2)(a) or 9(2)(a)

Lockdown and current border restrictions put in place as a part of the COVID-19 pandemic response have impacted Immigration New Zealand's (INZ's) ability to meet a number of quota/capped immigration programmes. Due to the deferral or suspension of some visa programmes, New Zealand will not meet its quotas or caps for a number of visa categories in the 2019/20 financial year. In particular, INZ will not meet the cap or quota for the below visa programmes:

Visa programme	2019/20 cap or quota	Actual visas/people approved	Notes
Out of scope			
Parent Category	1,000 (approved people)	0	Expression of Interest (EOI) draw was set to commence on 25 May 2020, however it was deferred. Currently 80 per cent of EOIs are from applicants who are offshore
			Out of scope
			Out of scope

[REDACTED]	Out of scope	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

For the majority of the above categories, the unfilled places within the 2019/20 financial year cap/quota will be lost upon commencement of the new financial year, or the date when the next scheme is set to open. A decision could be made for some categories to carry over the unused places from 2019/20 financial year cap/quota into 2020/21. Officials can provide more advice on this, including what would be required to 'carry over' the unused positions and for which programmes this would be viable.

Out of scope

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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