



01 SEP 2020

Sunny Kumar
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File No: DOIA 2021 – 0170

Dear Sunny Kumar

Thank you for your email on 14 July 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

I would like to know the answers to the following questions regarding partnership visas being processed at the Hamilton INZ branch: - How many partnership visa applications were pending in Aug'2019 (i.e. yet to be allocated to a case manager)? - The last application to be allocated to a case manager was submitted to INZ on what date? - How many applications were assigned to case managers in the month of January 2020? - How many applications were assigned to case managers in the month of February 2020? - What was the normal timeframe for partnership visa approvals from June 2019 to April 2020?

On 03 August 2020, you clarified that the visa product you are seeking information on is the "Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visa."

Our response

Please note that due to Covid-19 and the border restrictions currently in place, the Government made the decision to suspend the ability for most people offshore to apply for temporary entry class visa applications. This includes "Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visas." This is because legally Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is not able to grant a visa to individuals who are unlikely to meet entry requirements. Therefore, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is currently only processing applications from individuals who are onshore.

- How many partnership visa applications were pending in Aug'2019 (i.e. yet to be allocated to a case manager)?

INZ cannot provide you with the number of unallocated visa applications in August 2019. Our system only captures the number of unallocated applications at the time the query is run and previous figures are not generated. However, we can confirm that in August 2020 INZ had 784 'Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visa' unallocated applications as at 10 August 2020.

- The last application to be allocated to a case manager was submitted to INZ on what date?

The last 'Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visa' application allocated to an Immigration Officer was submitted on 03 July 2020 as at 10 August 2020. This application was submitted onshore.

- How many applications were assigned to case managers in the month of January 2020?

- How many applications were assigned to case managers in the month of February 2020?

We have considered consulting with you as required by section 18B of the OIA. However, the information you have requested is not held in a reportable format across the Ministry. Applications in the unallocated queue are allocated and processed on a rolling basis. To provide you with this information would require staff to manually review a large number of files which would remove ministry staff from their core duties, and therefore the greater public interest in effective and efficient administration of public service would not be served. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in both cases, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

We are therefore refusing your request under section 18(f) of the OIA because the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

- What was the normal timeframe for partnership visa approvals from June 2019 to April 2020?

Please see below the number of days it takes to process and approve "Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visa" applications:

Month	50% of applications completed and approved within:	75% of applications completed and approved within:	90% of applications completed and approved within:
Jun-19	32.5	67.5	110
Jul-19	33.5	68.5	104
Aug-19	37	72	105
Sep-19	50	113	182
Oct-19	41	83	140
Nov-19	57.5	151	212
Dec-19	68	116	191
Jan-20	46	105	187
Feb-20	66	151	223
Mar-20	71	169	213
Apr-20	108	174	241

Please note that we have not included the number of days it takes to process and decline applications under "Partner of a New Zealander Visitor Visa" as you did not request this information.

Please also note that while INZ is committed to processing visas as fast as practicable, it is critical that the right level of scrutiny is applied to ensure the right decisions are made for New Zealand.

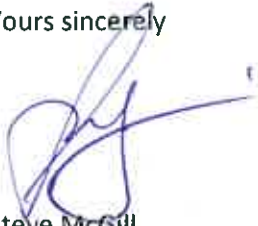
Processing times vary depending on a number of factors including the complexity of the application, the specific visa category the partnership application is being lodged under and whether or not the

application is decision-ready (i.e. has provided all the necessary information and supporting evidence).

You have the right to contest the decision to withhold information by seeking an investigation and review of that decision by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Margaret Huang, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Margaret.huang@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Steve McGill

General Manager – Strategy, Engagement and Education
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment