



20 January 2021

45 Pipitea Street, Wellington 6011

Phone +64 4 495 7200

Email OIA@dia.govt.nz

Website dia.govt.nz

Daniel

fyi-request-14230-

41e6cc94@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Daniel

Official Information Act 1982 request 2021-0305

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 1 December 2020.

You requested—

- 1. Can you please tell us when the Citizenship department will go back to normal timeframes and also can you please explain the breakdown of 5-10 months' timeframe you need for so everyone have the clear picture regarding the timeframe. Before COVID, I assume citizenship department already have these identity services to work on as well when the processing times are less (3-5 months)?*
- 2. Can you please put some light on data from last 3 years (including current year) how much citizenship applications has significantly increased?*
- 3. As we are in modern era and also whole NZ is working from home who can, I assume Department of Internal Affairs doesn't have a way or enough resources to Work from home while COVID?*

In response to your request I can provide you with the following information.

Question 1

The timeframes you have referred to are indicative only. There is no set standard processing timeframe for citizenship application because every application is different. For that reason, there is no 'normal' timeframe.

The timeframe quoted covers the entire application process, which starts when an applicant submits their application. The application then undergoes an assessment, validation and a decision on the outcome is made. The process is only complete when an applicant receives their Citizenship certificate (or confirmation that their application has not been approved).

Question 2

Please refer to Appendix A and Appendix B, attached. Appendix A provides you with a breakdown of the number of citizenship by grant applications received for the 2018-2020 calendar years. Appendix B provides you with a breakdown of the number of citizenship by grant applications completed for the 2018-2020 calendar years. It is important to note that 'completed' in this context is when the application is sent to the Minister for approval, or the Minister's delegated authority, not the date the citizenship certificate is issued.

Question 3

Most staff had the ability to work from home during lockdown. However, for security reasons the Department's Life and Identity systems cannot be accessed remotely. Because of this, there were only a small number of staff working from the office and providing essential services during the lockdown period. The majority of our staff members who process applications are Auckland based and were subject to two significant periods of time (Alert Levels three and four) where they were not able to process applications.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tiffany Scott', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tiffany Scott
Manager Branch Development and Support
Service Delivery and Operations