



1 March 2021

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Kay

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Dear Kay

Official Information Act 1982 request 2021-0414 – Citizenship application timeframes

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 29 January 2020.

You requested—

I am writing this to ask about the delays processing applications for citizenship by grant. I've known many people who applied & approved within 3 weeks of time but some other are still waiting to be allocated to a case officer.

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

Most applicants for citizenship by grant will be advised of the outcome from their application within 7 to 12 months of submitting a correct and complete application. There is no set standard processing timeframe for citizenship applications because every application is different. For that reason, there is no 'normal' timeframe.

The timeframe quoted above 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. No two applications are the same, and each can be delayed for a variety of reasons, and the Department is reliant on a number of third-party agency checks before proceeding. The process is only complete when an applicant receives their Citizenship certificate (or is advised that their application has not been approved).

It is also important to note that the applications for citizenship by descent follow a different process and have different timeframes. As these applicants are typically already entitled to New Zealand citizenship, the role of the Department consists of verifying their entitlement and registering their citizenship by descent, which is a much quicker process. Typically, it takes up to 20 working days to process a correct and complete application for citizenship by descent.

The Department is currently looking further into your concerns regarding potential discrepancies in the timeframes for processing citizenship applications. We will advise you of the outcome of this as soon as practicable.

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 blue ink, appearing to read 'J Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julia Taylor
Manager Operational Policy and Official Correspondence
Service Delivery and Operations