



16 April 2021

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Jesse Archer
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dia.govt.nz

Dear Jesse

Official Information Act 1982 request 2021-0538: Request for citizenship application timeframes

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 19 March 2021.

You requested –

I am seeking the current wait time for citizenship applications to be assigned to a case officer.

Please also advise why significantly less applications are being processed since March 2020 compared to the 12 months prior. I understand COVID19 occurred, but aside from the initial 6 week lockdown period, I can't understand why the numbers are down so much through the rest of the period unless there has been a specific political directive to stop or slow down processing applications?

In response to your request, please refer to Appendix A, attached. Appendix A provides you with the average length of time for citizenship applications to be assigned by a case officer.

Appendix A illustrates the impact of COVID-19 coinciding with the implementation of a new system, on the average wait time for Citizenship by Grant applications to be picked assigned by case officers.

As with any new system there were teething issues that created outages and delays, which is unfortunate but not unexpected. The Department has successfully deployed updates to this system over recent months, which we anticipate will enable us to deliver more timely outcomes in the citizenship space.

It is also important to explain that there is no set standard processing timeframe for citizenship application because every application is different. For that reason, there is no 'normal' timeframe.

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

Most applicants will be advised of the outcome from their application within 7 to 12 months of submitting a correct and complete application.

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 'Julia Taylor', with a stylized, cursive script.

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