



17 August 2021

Ref: DOIA 2122-0146

Anna Goodwin

fyi-request-16136-b5f5c538@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Anna

Thank you for your email of 20 July 2021 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

There is increasing awareness that PCR testing for Covid-19 is only viable for diagnostic testing in symptomatic patients. It was not meant to be a "screening test" as such due to the high level of false positives which can occur from non-viable homologous gene sequences which may exist in the human nasal cavity.

1. *Please provide the total number of MIQ patients with symptoms or who required medical treatment out of all of those testing positive by the nasal swab screening since border testing was implemented in 2020 up until July 2021.*
2. Please also list the total number of people that have been detained in MIQ since the Covid-19 pandemic response;
3. *the total number of Covid-19 tests deployed by MIQ; and*
4. the total cost of the MIQ program since its implementation.

On 30 July, we transferred parts *One* and *Three* to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to respond to in accordance with section 14(b)(i) of the Act. They will also respond as they see fit to your first statement.

Please note that MBIE officially took over management of Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) on 13 July 2020 (i.e. as the main PCBU) from MoH; however, the budget for MIQ under Vote Health was transferred to Vote Housing on 1 September 2020.

With respect to part *Two* of your request, this is publically available information, and can be found at:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/covid-19-data-resources/managed-isolation-and-quarantine-data/>

As noted at this site, the total number of people who have been through MIQ facilities since 26 March 2020 is currently **163,292** (as at 13 August).

MBIE-MIQ costs

From 1 July 2020 to 31 May 2021, MBIE utilised \$635m (excluding GST) of funding to deliver the MIQ system. Of that \$635m utilisation, \$456.5 million went towards delivery of services – this includes running the facilities, transport costs, paying for food and accommodation and MBIE staff salaries (head office in Wellington and at each Regional Isolation and Quarantine Control Centre (RIQCC)).

Two key cost breakdowns are:

- MIQ facility costs to house and provide meals for returnees: \$428.8 million.
- MIQ returnee transportation from airport to MIQ Facilities: \$20.5 million.

Please refer to MBIE's Annual Report for the period 2020-2021 when it is published on line towards the end of this year for further information on MBIE's MIQ costs. You can also refer to pages 85 and 122 of MBIE's 2019-2020 Annual Report i.e. Updated Forecast for the *Pre-election Economic & Fiscal Update and Events after balance date*: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/mbie-annual-report-2019-20.pdf>.

Ministry of Health Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) costs

Information relating to COVID-19 costs by MoH is released annually. MoH has advised MIE that it does not release part-year information as this does not reflect the full costs accounted for or the audited accounts. As found in Page 118 in its Annual Report 2020, \$79 million was spent to enhance border measures and provide Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQF). This can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/ministry-of-health-annual-report_2020.pdf.

The monthly District Health Board (DHB) Health Sector Report, available on the MoH website identifies the cumulative costs incurred by DHBs each month in relation to COVID-19. However, this does not break down to MIQF as this level of detail is not tracked yet. The monthly DHB Health Sector Report can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/district-health-boards/accountability-and-funding/summary-financial-reports/dhb-sector-financial-reports-2020-21.

You can also access recent MoH OIA responses on this topic at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests/information-relating-miq-costs>.

Other Agencies' Costs

The MBIE costings above do not include the costs to pay other frontline agency employees' salaries and any other assorted costs i.e. personnel employed by the relevant District Health Boards, the New Zealand Defence Force, the New Zealand Police and the New Zealand Aviation Security Service. You should refer to each agencies' Annual Report/Financial Report for this information.

Overall Government appropriation for COVID-19-related costs

The Estimates of Appropriations and Supplementary Estimates tabled on Budget Day 2021 details the overall funding appropriated for COVID-19-related costs. For 2021/2022, \$127.8 million was appropriated for the MIQF operating model and funding health costs. This can be found on page 12 at: <https://budget.govt.nz/budget/pdfs/estimates/v6/est21-v6-health.pdf>.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Shayne Gray
General Manager Service Quality and Assurance
Managed Isolation and Quarantine