



23 August 2021

Ref: DOIA 2122-0168

Name: Peter Russell

Email: fyi-request-16167-a1b06145@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Peter

Thank you for your email of 23 July 2021 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- “1. What is MBIE doing to prevent people securing MIQ allocation (including multiple MIQ places) and selling them to legitimate travellers?”*
- 2. Is there any intention of making this practices unlawful?”*
- 3. If so, please provide details. If not, why not?”*
- 4. Has MBIE assessed the number of people wishing to enter New Zealand during part or all of the remainder of 2021?”*
- 5. If so, please provide details. If not, why not?”*
- 6. What is the quantity of MIQ places available at any point in time based upon, i.e. what is the limiting factor?”*
- 7. Is there any intention of making it easier for legitimate travellers to secure MIQ allocation?”*
- 8. If so, please provide details. If not, why not?”*

#### Questions 1 - 3

Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) vouchers are non-transferrable - this means you cannot change any details which change the identity of the traveller. This is to prevent creating a secondary market in which vouchers can be traded or sold. We take a very strong position on the booking of duplicate vouchers. Any person with more than one voucher is contacted and asked to cancel their duplicate vouchers. If they do not cancel their duplicate vouchers we cancel them.

#### Questions 4-5

There is no way to ascertain the number of people wishing to enter New Zealand for part of, or the remainder of 2021. The number of people registered on the Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS), for example, includes those who have changed their minds about travelling, those intending to travel who are currently in New Zealand, as well as those who have completed intended travel. The MIAS system only provides a record of those who have registered on the system, and does not provide an indicator of those who intend to travel to New Zealand for all or the remainder of 2021. Therefore we are refusing that part of your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

#### Question 6

MIAS ensures the number of people arriving does not exceed the available rooms for returnees needing to complete 14 days in isolation before safely returning home. For New Zealand, that number is about 4,000

rooms every 20 days. It should be noted, that on a per-capita basis, we have made more spaces available for returnees than other countries, for example, Australia.

MIAS has performed well amid very strong booking demand. There are consistently a significant number of people on the site searching for an available date (20,000 per day on average recently). If a room becomes available on the site but is no longer there after a short period of time, this is because another person has booked it - there can be hundreds of people competing for rooms at the same time.

The current situation reflects a demand versus supply issue. Unfortunately, in periods of high demand many people will miss out on securing an MIQ voucher, regardless of the system that is used. The Government wants to be able to bring everyone home who wants to return, but we have to do that in a safe, managed way. To date, over 160,000 returnees have arrived into New Zealand, and completed their time in MIQ.

#### Questions 7-8

We are always enhancing the booking process to make it easier for travellers. Since we implemented the system, we've made over 200 improvements to it. Some are to do with security and system performance but a lot are to do with user experience. So we're constantly making changes to make it easier to use. For example recently we separated Step 2 into 2a and 2b, removing the need to re-enter room requirement details each time a date was selected. This makes it easier and faster for the traveller to use the system. Other system improvements have included, for example, including two reCAPTCHAs.

As you may already be aware, on 12 August 2021, the Prime Minister announced the direction for New Zealand's border management for the next six months, which includes; introducing a stratified opening at our borders; low, medium and high-risk, dependant on departure country and individual vaccination status, and a home isolation pilot programme, scheduled to begin in October 2021.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information on how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



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