

# Hon Jan Tinetti

Minister of Internal Affairs  
Minister for Women  
Associate Minister of Education



Chris McPhee

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Tēnā koe Mr McPhee,

Thank you for your email of 1 October 2021 to the Hon Kris Fa'afoi regarding the processing of visas under the Skilled Migrant category and, requesting consideration toward a reduction in the presence requirement, when applying for New Zealand citizenship. I am responding to the citizenship related matter you raised, as this falls within my portfolio responsibilities as Minister of Internal Affairs.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the impact and disruption Covid-19 has caused for many people across New Zealand. I can assure you that reducing not only the back log, but also the processing time for applications is a key priority for the Department of Internal Affairs.

When considering an application for the grant of New Zealand citizenship, my officials and I must adhere to the requirements as set out in the Citizenship Act 1977 (Act). The standard presence requirement is that an applicant must have been present in New Zealand as a resident for at least 1,350 days in the five years immediately preceding the citizenship application. This must include at least 240 days in New Zealand in each of the five years.

The Act does provide that in exceptional circumstances, particular to the applicant, I can accept a shorter presence period than that stipulated in the Act, but not less than 450 days during the 20 months before applying. I must note however; the exceptional circumstances test is hard to meet and is only met in comparably rare or unusual cases. The length of time in which it takes for a visa to be processed, unfortunately in itself would not be considered exceptional.

I wish you all the best with your citizenship journey once it comes time to apply and thank you again for writing.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Tinetti', written in a cursive style.

Hon Jan Tinetti  
**Minister of Internal Affairs**