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Tēnā koe Jose

Official Information Act 1982 request 2022-0517– BCPs for citizenship processing

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 17 January 2022.

You requested –

I would like to receive all plans and/or BCPs maintained by the Citizenship Office at DIA to continue processing citizenship by grant applications during the imminent Omicron outbreak to avoid the backlog continuing to grow even bigger than already is.

In response to your request, please see attached for the following documentation:

- *Appendix A – Scenario C Planning Template Kāwai ki ti Iwi SDO January 2022*
- *Appendix B – Scenario D Planning Template Kāwai ki ti Iwi SDO January 2022*
- *Appendix C – TE TARI TAIWHENUA - COVID-19 PROTECTION FRAMEWORK GUIDE - updated 20 JAN 2022*
- *Appendix D – Waterloo Quay Red Traffic Light Arrangements*

Some information has been withheld under the following section of the Act:

- *9(2)(a) of the Act; to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons*

Any information that is not directly related to citizenship by grant has been withheld and marked as out of scope, as it relates to the wider functions of the Department's service delivery.

It is important to explain that unlike during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, when citizenship processing was not deemed an essential service, citizenship processing is now categorised as such. In addition to this, the COVID-19 Protection Framework red-light setting allows all citizenship trained staff to be present and working in the office.

The Department has taken precautionary measures to ensure a safe working environment for staff, to allow the continued delivery of priority identity services such as citizenship by grant processing. These measures include the distribution of staff at our offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch across the available working space, focusing on the physical

separation of staff who complete the same tasks across floors, and by creating zoned working areas.

While the Department's essential services will continue to be delivered during the current red-light setting with these precautions in place, it is likely that the changing landscape will have an impact on these services. This has been factored into the planning the Department has undertaken, and continuing to provide services to our customers remains a priority.

Further comments

I would also like to explain that the Department has several initiatives underway to reduce the citizenship application backlog, speed up processing, and improve general customer experience.

In the immediate term this has included hiring additional temporary staff who focus on reducing the backlog of paper applications in our old system, freeing up most existing staff to work exclusively on online applications.

We expect that the time it takes for staff to process applications in our new online system will reduce as they become more familiar with it. We are also continuing to develop this new system and train more existing staff to process citizenship applications. We expect this range of initiatives to result in a significant decrease in the backlog in coming months.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Department has decided to proactively release a copy of this response on the DIA website. All requestor data including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>.

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.

Nāku noa nā



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