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Tēnā koe Ed

Official Information Act request 2122-0727 – Citizenship by grant timeframes

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 27 April 2021.

You requested –

- 1. Previous responses indicated that you have hired temporary staff to reduce the size of the backlog of citizenship applications. How many temporary staff were/are hired? Over what time scale? Please can you provide a table of the number of temporary staff working on citizenship applications by month, for the last 12 months, including April 2022.*
- 2. How many applications does a temporary staff member process per day? If you do not have this information, please provide me the total number of applications processed by temporary staff members per month, for the last 12 months, including April 2022.*
- 3. Please release any analysis that was undertaken around the right number of temporary staff to hire. I imagine that you might have internal resource planning documents that explored the tension between increasing the number of temporary staff, processing times and cost.*
- 4. Please provide me your planning assumptions about average processing time when the new system is fully operational and the backlog cleared. Note that, per previous requests that others have made, I am not interested in a 'normal' processing time, but an average. In particular, I would be interested in any documents where a decision was taken to return (or not) to the 3-5 month norm.*
- 5. In previous OIA responses, you have indicated 'mid 2022' as when things will start getting better. Please be more specific. When in mid 2022? In addition, please release any internal analysis which has been undertaken to inform this statement. Note that I am not necessarily interested in the high level statements you have shared previously (e.g. as staff get more familiar with the system) but to see any documents or analysis you have done which has given you confidence that it will be better by mid 2022.*

6. *Pls release the number of applications received per month and the number approved per month, by month, for the last 12 months including April 2022. I wish to calculate the rate at which the backlog is being cleared. As an addition, and not a replacement, to the above, if you have an internal future forecast about the size of the backlog by month in graph or table form, pls share that too.*

In response to your request I can provide you with the following information.

Question one

I can advise that as at 16 May 2022, the Department had 16 temporary staff working in the citizenship space. The start dates for these temporary staff members are as follows:

- Five started on 09/08/2021
- Three started on 01/10/2021
- One started on 15/11/2021
- Two started on 04/04/2022
- Five started on 16/05/2022.

Questions two, three, four, five and six

I can advise that the citizenship by grant backlog began reducing in April of 2022. However, the remaining information requested requires significant time and resources to gather, analyse, peer review and prepare for release. Therefore, I must refuse the remainder of your request under section 18(f) of the Act; that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

There is already extensive information available to the public regarding citizenship processing timeframes both on the citizenship application timeframes webpage here:

<https://www.govt.nz/browse/passports-citizenship-and-identity/nz-citizenship/how-to-apply-for-nz-citizenship/application-timeframes/> and on the Department's OIA proactive release webpage as linked below, which may be of interest to you.

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.

Ngā mihi



Julia Taylor
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Kāwai ki te Iwi Service Delivery and Operations