

# Hon Michael Wood

MP for Mt Roskill

Minister of Immigration

Minister of Transport

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety



18 JUL 2022

OIA22-421

A KS

[fyi-request-19721-7d0ad04d@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19721-7d0ad04d@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear A KS,

Thank you for your email of 21 June 2022 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*1:- Could you advise by when EOI selection of this category be started ( any definite date ) ? If you don't have a date , by when that would be decided ?*

*2:- What is the policy of the government for the EOIs that currently meet the income criteria which was decided in the last review ?*

*3:- In the past, labour government had done a lot of reviews and there were some options for low income criteria too . Is there a still need for another review when government had taken a lot of advice on it during 2018/19 review ( and later ) and government already had review options from INZ ? ( as per the MBIE public document library ).*

Reopening the Parent Category Resident Visa (Parent Category) is a priority for this government.

The reopening of Parent Category expression of interest (EOI) selections, and government policy for EOIs that currently meet the income criteria, are being considered but no decisions have been made. As such I have decided to withhold this information under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

With regard to the ongoing review, Parent Category EOI selections have been paused since 2016, pending a review of the visa settings, which was completed in 2018-19. Following this review, in 2019 Cabinet agreed to a number of changes to the Parent Category, most notably decreasing the annual cap on individual visas granted from 2,000 per year to 1,000, increasing the income threshold for sponsors to a benchmark of two times the median wage, and agreeing to resume EOI selections in 2020. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on visa processing, Immigration New Zealand was unable to resume EOI selections for the Parent Category at that time and they remain paused.

In 2020, the Labour Party made a manifesto commitment to reduce barriers to access the Parent Category. The manifesto commitment, along with the length of time since the last

comprehensive review of the Parent Category, has meant a review of the Parent Category is necessary to assess whether the current settings are fit for purpose and achieve the objective of the visa category. The review will look at barriers to access the Parent Category and options to resume selections of EOIs. I am aware of the long period of time that has passed since this visa category was closed and will be working to expedite the review and decisions as quickly as reasonably possible.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in this circumstance, the withholding of any information is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Wood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Hon Michael Wood  
**Minister of Immigration**