



BRIEFING

Interim accommodation options post MIQ and support services for arrivals from Afghanistan

Date:	1 September 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-0781

Action sought		
Ministers with Power to Act on the Afghan response	Action sought	Deadline
<p>Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern Prime Minister</p> <p>Hon Grant Robertson Minister of Finance</p> <p>Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration</p> <p>Hon Peeni Henare Minister of Defence</p>	<p>a. Approve the Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments as the temporary accommodation option for the evacuees.</p> <p>b. Approve an increase in operating funding for Vote Labour Market of \$3 million from the between-Budget contingency to give effect to the recommended option above.”</p> <p>c. Direct the <i>Evacuation Afghanistan – Accommodation and Resettlement Senior Officials’ Group</i> to report back on actual costs at the end of the phase for a reconciliation.</p> <p>d. Direct officials to update Ministers and provide funding and support service options if costs look likely to exceed the appropriated amount.</p> <p>e. Refer this briefing to the key Ministers responsible for providing required support services including: Hon Megan Woods (Minister for Housing and Urban Development, and for Kainga Ora), Hon Chris Hipkins (Minister of Education), Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Minister for Social Development and Employment), Hon Andrew Little (Minister of Health), Hon Poto Williams (Minister of Police), Hon Jan Tinetti (Associate Minister of Education, Migrant and Refugees), Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan (Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities), and Hon Kelvin Davis (Minister for Children).</p>	<p>2 September 2021</p>

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Fiona Whiteridge	General Manager, Refugee and Migrant Services	s9(2)(a)		✓
Andrew Craig	Immigration Policy Manager			
Loretta Elive-Daunakamakama	Principal Advisor to the General Manager, Refugee and Migrant Services	s9(2)(a)		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

The Treasury; Ministries of Health; Housing and Urban Development; Social Development; Education; Ethnic Communities; New Zealand Police; New Zealand Defence Force; Oranga Tamariki; Kainga Ora; National Emergency Management Agency; and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Interim accommodation options post MIQ and support services for arrivals from Afghanistan

Date:	1 September 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-0781

Purpose

This briefing seeks approval of the recommended interim accommodation option for the evacuees following their 14-day stay at a Managed Isolation Quarantine (MIQ) facility and before permanent housing solutions are found and secured. It also seeks funding approval to secure the recommended interim accommodation and to provide tailored support services needed. Annex One provides a summary of options considered by the Afghanistan Evacuation - *Accommodation and Settlement Senior Officials Group*.

Recommendations

1. The All of Government Officials Group comprising of representatives from the Ministries of Business, Innovation and Employment (chair), Health; Social Development; Education; Ethnic Communities; Housing and Urban Development; New Zealand Police; New Zealand Defence Force; Oranga Tamariki; Kainga Ora; National Emergency Management Agency; and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet recommends that you:
 - a. **Note** that Cabinet authorised a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Immigration and Minister of Defence to have Power to Act to take further decisions on New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan [CMG-21-MIN-0001 refers], and this includes approval for funding for associated activities.

Noted
 - b. **Note** that a cross-agency Senior Officials' Working Group - *Afghanistan Evacuation - Accommodation and Settlement Officials Group* – has considered interim accommodation options and support services for evacuees following their 14-day stay at a Managed Isolation Quarantine (MIQ) facility, and before finding more permanent accommodation solutions across New Zealand as required.

Noted
 - c. **Note** that the first cohort of evacuees are due to complete their 14-days quarantine at MIQ within the next week. They will start exiting MIQ from Monday 6 September 2021 and many will require temporary accommodation.

Noted

- d. **Note** that evacuees are arriving as New Zealand citizens and on a range of permanent and temporary visa types. As at 1 September 2021, 390 evacuees have arrived in New Zealand. Some will require interim accommodation after exiting MIQ, while others already have permanent housing or temporary housing to move into post their stay at MIQ.
- Noted*
- e. **Note** that four interim accommodation options were considered by the officials group against a set criteria including efficiency and effectiveness.
- Noted*
- f. **Note** one interim accommodation option was deemed suitable and viable, the Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments, in central Auckland because it could cater for the mix of family types and needs and is in close proximity to required support services and community connections.
- Noted*
- g. **Note** that indicative costings suggest funding of \$3m is required to secure the preferred temporary accommodation and other associated expenses such as transportation, health, counselling, psychosocial, and education for an initial period of six weeks. This figure maybe higher depending on the need, duration of stay plus any necessary support services.
- Noted*
- h. **Agree** to a temporary accommodation and support package consisting of housing, food and transportation while access to longer term housing is organised.
- Agreed / Not Agreed*
- i. **Note** that due to COVID-19 restrictions and security and practical concerns, the recommended option in recommendation [h] above is to contract the Nesuto Hotel and Apartments for occupancy of the whole hotel to accommodate for the evacuees and to provide tailored support services onsite.
- Noted*
- j. **Approve** the preferred option of Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments as a temporary accommodation for evacuees' post completion of MIQ. This will ensure adherence to bubble arrangements under COVID-19 Alert Level 4 requirements.
- Approved / Not Approved*

- k. **approve** the following change to appropriation from Vote Labour Market to give effect to recommended accommodation in recommendations [h] and [j] above, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance and net core Crown debt:

	\$m – increase/(decrease)				
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 & out years
Vote Labour Market	3.000	-	-	-	-
Minister of Immigration					
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure:					
Immigration Services MCA					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Settlement and Integration of Refugees and Other Migrants (funded by revenue Crown)					

Approved / Not approved

- l. **Agree** that the proposed change to appropriations above be included in the 2021/2022 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest Supply.

Agreed / Not agreed

- m. **Agree** that the expenses incurred under recommendation [k] above be charged against the between-Budget contingency established as part of Budget 2021.

Agreed / Not agreed

- n. **Direct** the Evacuation Afghanistan – *Accommodation and Resettlement Senior Officials' Group* to report back on actual costs at the end of the phase for a reconciliation.

Directed / Not directed

- o. **Direct** officials to update Ministers and provide advice on funding and support service options if costs look likely to exceed the appropriated amount.

Directed / Not directed

- p. **Refer** this briefing to the key Ministers responsible for providing required support services including: Hon Megan Woods (Minister for Housing and Urban Development, and for Kainga Ora), Hon Chris Hipkins (Minister of Education), Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Minister for Social Development and Employment), Hon Andrew Little (Minister of Health), Hon Poto Williams (Minister of Police), Hon Jan Tinetti (Associate Minister of Education, Migrant and Refugees), Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan (Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities), and Hon Kelvin Davis (Minister for Children).

Referred / Not referred

Fiona Whiteridge
General Manager
Refugee and Migrant Services
Immigration New Zealand, MBIE

1 September 2021

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister

..... / /

Hon Grant Robertson
Minister of Finance

..... / /

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

Hon Peeni Henare
Minister of Defence

..... / /

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Background

1. The Government announced on 16 August 2021, that it would evacuate New Zealand citizens and permanent residents and their immediate families, as well as Afghan nationals who worked with New Zealand during the two-decade long conflict in Afghanistan, and who may now be at risk. An all-of-government response was stood up to ensure a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to this evolving global humanitarian situation.
2. Given the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan following the attacks on Friday 27 August 2021 New Zealand time, the government confirmed that the window for evacuations has now closed. This follows the Governments earlier decision that New Zealand was no longer accepting requests from Afghan nationals for resettlement in New Zealand under the special criteria agreed by Cabinet.
3. As of 1 September 2021, 390 individuals and family groups have arrived in New Zealand.
4. Work has been underway at pace to identify suitable interim accommodation options and support services for the resettlement of evacuees post their 14-day stay at MIQ and before moving into more permanent housing solutions, for those that require it.
5. Evacuees fall into one of the following categories:
 - a. Those who have a permanent housing solution with families or community connections.
 - b. Those who have temporary accommodation with families or community connections that they can move into after exiting MIQ, and while they find more permanent housing.
 - c. Those who do not have any housing to move into after exiting MIQ.
6. At this point in time, it is unclear how many are in each category. We expect to have a clearer picture of the housing needs following an initial assessment from an Immigration New Zealand (INZ) Resettlement Case Officer. The initial contact from an INZ Resettlement Case Officers is carried out in the first few days of arrival and includes information about housing options, family connections in New Zealand and any urgent care needs.
7. Following this initial assessment, families who are New Zealand citizens and permanent residents are referred on to the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) Community Connectors service based in the Managed Isolation Facility. The Community Connectors service was established in MIQ to support returning New Zealanders. The Community Connectors provides support throughout the duration of stay in MIQ and will ensure appropriate referrals to relevant community support services. This will likely include referrals to the Community Connector in the chosen settlement location who can provide wrap around support. It is anticipated support needs will vary from very little to more intensive wrap around support.
8. MSDs Community Connector service is a community response and is being used to support people in our communities in a variety of situations and visa types, such as temporary visa holders or those who are not currently New Zealand residents or citizens. On this basis, while Community Connector support prioritises New Zealand residents and citizens, those holding alternative visas are not excluded from this support.
9. Further assessments will be needed to determine the nature and complexity of support that the evacuees will require, and the funding and workforce requirements needed to give effect to this support. For example, where community-based support is required, assessment of workforce capacity, additional resourcing and funding for Community Connector support will be imperative.

Characteristics and settlement information based on the initial cohort of 83 evacuees that have been assessed

10. Due to the timing of arrivals, only 83 evacuees within MIQ have so far been fully assessed. The requirements of this cohort have been extrapolated out to give a sense of indicative costings. This comes with many caveats due to the limited information available on actual numbers and mixture of people arriving, the type of help and support services needed, and most importantly length of stay (which will partly be determined by the time Auckland is in Alert Levels 3 and 4).
11. The initial group of 83 is made up of families ranging in sizes and ages from one member to eight members, and ages from one years old to over 60 years old. Tables One and Two below provides demographic information about the ages and family compositions of the 83.

Table One: Age composition

Ages	Number
00-04	11
05-12	11
13-17	9
18-30	30
31-40	9
41-50	11
51-60	
60+	2
TOTAL	83

Table Two: Family composition

Family sizes	Number
1 member	5
2 members	6
3 members	7
4 members	4
5 members	0
6 members	1
7 members	1
8 members	2
TOTAL	26

12. Based on information gathered from the 83 cohort, Table Three shows the level of housing need after exiting MIQ.

Table Three: Indicative level of housing need

Residency status	Numbers of evacuees that:			TOTAL
	Need housing	Have permanent housing	Have temporary housing	
New Zealand citizens	18	8	7	33
New Zealand permanent residents	8	3	1	12
Critical purpose visa holders	2	4	6	38
TOTAL	54	15	14	83

13. From this initial assessment of the 83 evacuees that are in MIQ, there is a clear preference for accommodation in Auckland, with only a handful expressing preference to resettle in other regions around New Zealand. This gives a clear indication that the majority of the evacuees will want to resettle in the main centres close to their communities and other essential cultural and support services.
14. Table Four illustrates the preferred location for permanent resettlement for the initial cohort of 83.

Table Four: Evacuees preferred location for resettlement

Preferred resettlement region	Numbers of evacuees that:			TOTAL
	Need housing	Have permanent housing	Have temporary housing	
Auckland	32	4	10	46
Hamilton	2	7		9
Wellington	3		1	4

Palmerston North		3	3	6
Christchurch	1	1		2
Invercargill	4			4
Auckland or Dunedin	3			3
Auckland or Wellington	1			1
Open	8			8
TOTAL	54	15	14	83

15. COVID-19 has limited the temporary accommodation options considered for those in Auckland. There are risks that an interim accommodation may not be ready for the first cohort of evacuees to move into after exiting MIQ if decisions are not made quickly.
16. Finding longer term housing for people and the time that might take given housing constraints and limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions and changing alert levels.

Part One - Accommodation options and indicative costings

17. The cross-agency Afghanistan Evacuation – *Accommodation and Resettlement Officials Group* made of representatives from relevant agencies across government, has considered several options to provide interim accommodation for evacuees after exiting MIQ and before finding more permanent housing solutions.
18. Table Five provides a summary of options officials have assessed against a set criteria to arrive at the recommended option of a hotel accommodation working closely with MIQ. These options were overlaid with COVID-19 alert level changes, as well as security requirements.

Table Five: Summary assessment of options considered

Criteria	Accommodation options considered			
	Option 1 Existing hotel/motel working with MIQ	Option 2 Temporary accommodation through MSD and Kainga Ora	Option 3 Whangaparāoa	Option 4 Culturally appropriate accommodation
Effectiveness	Yes	-	No	No
Timing feasibility	Yes	No	No	No
Political feasibility	Yes	-	Yes	No
Social responsibility	Yes	No	No	No
Efficiency	Yes	No	No	No
Equity	Yes	-	No	No
Cultural appropriateness	Yes	-	No	No
Recommended option	Suitable and viable option. Requires significant funding.	MSD can contribute to community support. There is no capacity in the current housing system.	Not suitable.	Not suitable.

19. Of all of the options assessed, a dedicated hotel, was the only viable and suitable option. Annex One provides a summary assessment of all options considered.

20. In terms of location, Auckland is the most appropriate given the concentration and high level of access to specialist support services that will be required to provide support to the evacuees. Also, there are strong Afghan communities in Auckland that could play a key role in assisting with successful resettlement in New Zealand over the medium-to-longer term. It is noted that COVID-19 movement restrictions does pose several challenges, but this can be managed by all agencies working together to support the evacuees.
21. Advice from the Ministry of Health reaffirmed Auckland as the preferred location. Although it was noted that other regions may not have the same level of pressure on the health sector as Auckland, there are limited number of specialist services in other regions. If evacuees were to be relocated outside of Auckland, specialist health and other support services professionals would need to travel to those regions which would create unintended consequences including the possibility of Covid-19 transmission.
22. Finding a possible accommodation solution was further complicated by the need to secure accommodation within a short time so that agencies can get it ready for use when the first cohort of evacuees start to exit MIQ from Monday 6 September 2021.
23. Further, evacuees are all arriving via Auckland and with Auckland being in Alert Level 4 for longer, personal movement is highly restricted. Some evacuees will be permitted to travel home, or to their place of residence, after being in managed isolation without an exemption from the Ministry of Health. The Public Health Response Order for Alert Levels sets out permitted reasons for travel and includes allowing someone to leave managed isolation or quarantine to go to their home or intended residence.
24. Several other options were considered including the New Zealand Defence Force Whangaparāoa site, iwi and other community facilities and they were assessed against the criteria. None were deemed suitable.
25. The successful implementation of this option requires an all-of-government effort to ensure the safety and wellbeing of evacuees and the co-ordination of services across agencies.
26. Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa, (Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre), was not included in the list of options as it is currently not available. It is currently close to its maximum capacity accommodating 226 residents from the Refugee Quota Programme. While Auckland remains at Alert Levels 3 and 4 its residents cannot move to accommodation in the community.

Recommended accommodation option

27. In looking for a suitable accommodation option, officials' worked closely with MIQ and leveraged off their recent review of New Zealand's hotel network.
28. The recommended option is the Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments situated in the central Auckland in close proximity to grocery stores and areas for recreation. This hotel was selected in consultation with MIQ who rejected it because it did not have adequate exercise facilities for people in isolation or quarantine. The hotel will be sufficient to meet the capacity of up to 80 families given the uncertain demand and transition rates, and will also provide space to utilise for support services.
29. Funding is required to cover the use of the hotel and associated expenses including transportation, food and other required support services such as health (psychosocial / mental health support), education at the hotel. Annex Two provides for a list of support services including initial advice from some agencies like Ethnic Communities and Education for funding to provide additional support for the evacuees.
30. It is therefore recommended that Ministers approve funding of \$3 million to secure accommodation and support services for up to 400 expected evacuees for an initial period of up to six weeks. This figure maybe higher depending on the need and duration of stay for the evacuees which will be partially determined by how long Auckland remains at COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4.

31. In the event a longer duration is needed, officials will assess other options and report back to Ministers on funding options.

Hotel specifications

32. The hotel has 244 rooms and apartments in total, and 10 studio apartments that are suitable for wheelchair use or those with mobility issues and includes modified bathrooms. It has a flexible layout that can be adapted to suit different needs and includes options to join rooms to bring in additional single beds and additional furnishings to meet differing family compositions. It also has the option to provide a fully catered service to the evacuees, as well as options to self-cater or provide a 'pantry service'.
33. In addition, the hotel has multi-purpose spaces that could be utilised by government staff to have a 'hub' to offer support for people such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development and Immigration New Zealand. The site has secure entrances with swipe access to all rooms and has the ability to lock access to certain zones as necessary.
34. The hotel has areas that could meet specific cultural and religious needs and these could be adapted to meet these requirements. The hotel can be booked in its entirety or for the rooms and spaces specifically required to accommodate this cohort, as well as to enable the provision of support services onsite.
35. For security purposes, given that this is a vulnerable group who have experienced some level of trauma, it is more cost-effective and equitable to acquire the entire facility. Under COVID-19 and advice from the Ministry of Health, this option enables families to be in bubble arrangements and provide onsite support services.
36. It is noted that with COVID-19 in the community and Auckland being in Alert Level 4, there is a risk of maintaining effective bubbles within the up to 400 people on one site.
37. Advice from MIQ officials who have been working to secure accommodation for managed isolation purposes, is that it would be almost impossible, if at all, to find something similar to the Nesuto in regions that are within a coach drive from Auckland. Particularly given the quantum of family rooms that are likely to be required plus the provision of full daily catering, ancillary staff, spaces to offer support services and suitable spaces for cultural undertakings such as prayer rooms.

Medium to longer term accommodation

38. Officials are also looking into medium to longer term permanent accommodation for the evacuees. There are challenges with finding longer term housing for people and the time that might take given housing constraints and limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions and changing alert levels. Officials will continue to work collectively to find innovative solutions to ensure permanent housing solutions are found for successful resettlement into New Zealand.
39. Further work will be undertaken by relevant agencies on the types of support and additional wrap around services that may be required to support the new arrivals over the medium to longer term. This would include leveraging existing initiatives or identifying assistance needed by local communities to support evacuees.

Part Two - Support services available across government

40. Through the all-of-government officials group, it has been identified that there are varying levels of support that are already available that could be leveraged to support the evacuees, as summarised in Table Six.
41. However, most agencies have confirmed that current levels of resources are already allocated and additional funding will be required to provide tailored support services for this group.

42. Once evacuees leave temporary accommodation they may need and be eligible for additional assistance based on need. Evacuees who supported New Zealand agencies are being granted residency and will have the same access to support and benefits as New Zealanders once their application for residency has been approved.
43. Agencies will identify any further gaps that could be addressed for any of these groups including eligibility criteria and provide advice on additional medium term support as needed. Annex Two provides more detail of some of the available support services provided by relevant support services agencies.

Table Six: Government support services available

Government agencies	Services provided
Ministry of Social Development	Income support Employment supports include Flexi-Wage subsidies, Mana in Mahi, and work brokerage services (depending on individual eligibility). Community support
Ministry of Health	Health services including psychosocial and other health support as required
New Zealand Police	Navigation, legal and crime prevention services to new migrants and refugees Ethnic Liaison Officer network in Auckland
Ministry of Education	Education / recreation packs Education programmes on TV Devices for learning to make communication and access to education material e.g. laptops, iPad Senior Advisors Refugee and Migrant in the regions
Ministry of Ethnic Communities	Engagement and connections with Afghan communities Language assistance services e.g. translation and interpretation
Oranga Tamariki	Provides care or protection, youth justice and adoption services

Financial implications

Securing preferred accommodation

44. Cabinet authorised a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Immigration and Minister of Defence to have Power to Act to take further decisions on New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan [CMG-21-MIN-0001 refers], and this includes approval for funding for associated activities.
45. The \$3 million required would be funded by the between-Budget contingency through a change to appropriation in Vote Labour Market for the 2021/22 financial year. This funding specifically authorises MBIE/ INZ to spend it for the provision of services that enable the settlement and integration of migrants and refugees into New Zealand society.
46. The funds will secure the Nesuto Hotel and Apartments to provide temporary accommodation including catering, as well as other required support services such as health (psychosocial / mental health support), education and engagements with the local communities, for example. Refer to Annex Two for a list of support services including initial advice from some agencies like Ethnic Communities and Education for funding in order to provide additional support for the evacuees.
47. Given the uncertainty with COVID-19 Alert Level changes and the numbers of new arrivals, this cost could be much higher and it is not possible to provide greater cost certainty at this time. The Evacuation Afghanistan – *Accommodation and Resettlement Senior Officials' Group* will report back on actual costs at the end of the phase for a reconciliation and any additional funding sought if this is required.
48. Further, agencies have not yet undertaken an assessment for the level of support that would be required for the evacuees beyond accommodation, transportation and food. As noted

earlier, there will be varying needs from little support to more intensive wrap-around support services such as an allowance for personal expenses, trauma and mental health support, education, services for children and people with disabilities for example. A more fulsome assessment of the types of support services and approximate costs would be undertaken by officials in the coming days to inform the analysis and report back to Ministers.

49. Officials have considered other funding sources from within agencies' current baselines. Some agencies, for example the Ministry of Health and Oranga Tamariki, have indicated that they have some ability to support this phase of the settlement for evacuees from within existing baselines. However, there may be other funding required by agencies which cannot be met from baselines and if required, officials will report back with further advice on funding options.

Consultation

50. The Treasury; Ministries of Social Development; Education; Health; Housing and Urban Development; Ethnic Communities; New Zealand Police; New Zealand Defence Force; Oranga Tamariki; Kainga Ora; and National Emergency Management Agency have been consulted on this paper. Officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have also contributed.

Annex

Annex One: Matrix of interim accommodation options considered

Annex Two: Support services available across government

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Annex One: Matrix of interim accommodation options considered

51. The tables below provides officials' assessment of interim accommodation options considered for evacuees against a set criteria after exiting MIQ and before moving into more permanent housing solutions.

Table A: Criteria used to assess proposed options

Criteria	Description
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option achieve the desired outcome of accommodating evacuees safely and securely for a time, until they can be transitioned into more long term housing solutions? Will the accommodation have the appropriate levels of security for the evacuees' safety? Will the accommodation be of appropriate size and suitability for expected evacuees of upwards of 400? Will the accommodation be suitable for vulnerable groups? Will the accommodation have access to recreational facilities for general welfare and wellbeing?
Timing feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the option be stood up in 5 days? This is a time critical situation.
Political feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option be accepted by decision makers and the general public, particularly given the layers of issues in this COVID-19 environment? Will the option meet New Zealand's international obligations?
Social responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option contribute to the overall welfare and wellbeing of society and the environment? Will the evacuees have access to: social services, health services, mental health services?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option achieve efficiency gains and reduce duplication of efforts and wastage of resources?
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option be fair and just? Considering the circumstances surrounding assistance to evacuees from Afghan versus New Zealanders who are stranded abroad and want to return home but cannot due to COVID-19 requirements nationally, and travel restrictions globally.
Cultural appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the option be culturally appropriate? Will the local relevant community groups have the opportunity to offer their support and services for the new arrivals? Will the option ensure ongoing wrap-around support for the wellbeing and welfare of the new arrivals?

Table B: Accommodation options assessment

52. Table B below provides an assessment of accommodation options undertaken, each by the nominated agencies against the set criteria.

Interim accommodation options and support services for evacuees post MIQ				
Criteria	Option 1 – Utilise existing hotel/ motel accommodation – Site Assessment of Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments, Auckland Central Lead agency: MBIE	Option 2 - Temporary Accommodation through MSD and Kainga Ora in the settlement location. Supported by MSD Community Connectors Lead agency: MSD	Option 3 – Whangaparaoa Lead agency: NZDF	Option 4 – Culturally appropriate community sites i.e. Islamic Centres in New Zealand etc Lead agency: Ethnic Communities
Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and Security • Appropriate size and suitability for upwards of 300 • Suitability for vulnerable people/ groups • Access to recreational facilities / amenities 	<p>Potential Hotel in Auckland identified</p> <p>Site has secure entrances with swipe access to all rooms. Ability to lock access to certain zones and CCTV.</p> <p>Has ability to add additional fencing if required, as well as provide facilities to any security personnel posted at the hotel if required.</p> <p>Hotel has 244 rooms and apartments in total. Hotel has 10 studio apartments that are suitable for wheelchair use/mobility issues. Includes modified bathrooms. The hotel has a flexible layout that can be adapted to suit different needs. This includes options to join rooms, bring in additional single beds and additional furnishings to meet family composition.</p> <p>In addition, hotel has multipurpose spaces that could be utilised by government staff to have a 'base' while supporting people (e.g. MoH/MoE/MSD/INZ)</p> <p>Hotel is located in Auckland Central. There is access to grocery stores and exercise areas for walking at the waterfront and Auckland downtown.</p> <p>Hotel has the option to provide a fully catered service to the evacuees, as well as options to self-cater or provide a 'pantry service'.</p>	<p>Support can be provided through the Community Connection Service.</p> <p>However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accommodation capacity through Community Connection Service • No accommodation capacity through community providers, iwi, Māori. <p>We will also look to engage our E Tu Whanau team who work closely with our Afghanistan community in New Zealand.</p> <p>We will ensure all MSD messages are translated.</p>	<p>Security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical security is achievable in that the peninsula is fenced. Being that it is Defence property it is closed to the public. • National Security. Use of Whangaparāoa will restrict use of the facility for NZDF. Two key points being; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whangaparāoa remains an in-use NZDF training facility. Its use during Wuhan effectively saw the cessation of much of its use by NZDF; having a flow-on effect into the training and readiness. ○ It is also currently being used to isolate Navy personnel when they rotate through duty within MIQFs (and are then awaiting testing before returning to duty/home locations). <p>Safety: Whangaparāoa has cliffs, high points, sinkholes, disused tunnels, and such. During the Wuhan event this required briefings for the people on safe areas, and staff available to provide guided walks in order to avoid dangerous areas.</p> <p>Size: The current infrastructure is suitable for only 100-120 personnel.</p> <p>Suitability: During the Wuhan event it was assessed that the current infrastructure was not really suitable for families or mixed groups. It is not particularly suitable for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Access to Recreation: Further to the point regarding safety, above. Other than open areas itself there is no access to recreational facilities. Park/Playground type infrastructure had to be brought in for the Wuhan returnees.</p>	<p>Current facilities are in the form halls and prayer rooms, and area not a viable option.</p> <p>Not suitable under this COVID environment.</p>
Timing feasibility Time critical can be stood up in 5 days	<p>The hotel is available in the time frame required and has most services in place.</p>	<p>Community Connection Service is in place now, however additional funding may be required to support additional demand, including investment in food system.</p> <p>Community Connector will also work with other MSD services to ensure all needs are met.</p> <p>We will also look to engage our E Tu Whanau team who work closely with our Afghanistan community in New Zealand.</p> <p>We will ensure all MSD messages are translated.</p>	<p>The current infrastructure is ready, however the ability to prepare it in five days is questionable with current use for isolation.</p> <p>Any additional infrastructure will be dependent upon what is required, and alert level to have this put in place. Previously this took at least a week.</p>	

<p>Political feasibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palatable to decision makers Meets international obligations 	<p>Would be seen as providing a good level of accommodation but cost could be a factor.</p> <p>Would meet international standards for accommodation providing apartment style accommodation with facilities (cooking, separate bedrooms)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This may be desirable in the sense that it could be considered an “easy” option; countering that would be the additional risk of displacing the current NZDF use for isolation (heightening the risk of spread within NZDF) and further impacting NZDF readiness.</p>	
<p>Social responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welfare and wellbeing of society Access to essential services e.g. health, mental health, education etc 	<p>Limited on site but medical and mental health support could be accessed locally and supported by agencies</p>	<p>Community Connector will also work with other MSD services and across government to ensure all needs are met.</p>	<p>Limited, if any, impact on wider society in the short term. Very limited access to services. These had to be “delivered” to the site previously.</p>	
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>Cost could be higher than other options but provides ease of access to facilities including recreation, medical, mental health and psycho social support.</p> <p>The site is ready to go with minimal requirements for additional infrastructure other than security and direct support.</p>		<p>If the previous “Whan-model” is used this is not efficient. It was a costly exercise to essentially build and run a large camper-van park with other infrastructure on-site.</p> <p>If only the existing infrastructure is used, disregarding suitability and other use issues, it may be relatively efficient; however it will need staff on site to run. This would include catering staff, unless meals are delivered, as the accommodation only has a single large kitchen/dining hall (no cooking facilities in the sleeping accommodation).</p>	
<p>Equity</p>	<p>In terms of equity the facility provides for families of different sizes and adjacent rooms can be connected for larger families.</p> <p>Each apartment provides separate self-contained accommodation including kitchen and bathrooms</p>		<p>There are limited equity issues with regard to this site. However the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “communal” style of the existing facilities may not be suitable or considered appropriate. If more than one site is utilised, going to this facility may be considered the less desirable option (without substantial additional infrastructure). 	
<p>Cultural appropriateness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culturally appropriate Leveraging community connections Ongoing wraparound support 	<p>Apartments are self-contained and provide facilities for the family. Washing/laundry/self-catering options are available. The accommodation would be similar to that provided at MRRC. Access to meet specific dietary requirements may need to be addressed.</p> <p>The hotel has a space that could be used as a prayer room.</p> <p>The hotel is able to offer a space for wraparound services to base themselves from.</p> <p>Hotel has smart TVs and high speed wifi to support evacuees to connect with community/families.</p> <p>If alert levels drop – there is a space that could be utilised for broader community meetings and support.</p>	<p>There are community connectors that are focused on support our CALD community.</p> <p>We will also look to engage our E Tu Whanau team who work closely with our Afghanistan community in New Zealand.</p> <p>We will ensure all MSD messages are translated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertain of the cultural appropriateness of the site, however the following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriateness, or not, of the communal living environment. If other NZDF activity is continued at the site, whether this could impact the mental state of people evacuated from a conflict zone. As an NZDF site with restricted public access, community connections would have to be arranged ahead of time. Any wrap around support would need to move to the site. 	
<p>RECOMMENDATION:</p>	<p>Provides a suitable and viable option to accommodate families for a short period prior to moving into the community.</p> <p>Requires significant funding.</p>	<p>MSD can contribute to community support.</p> <p>There is no capacity in the current housing system and therefore MBIE needs to maximise the current system (i.e. TLA) to resolve any accommodation requirements.</p>	<p>For the reasons outlined above, use of Whangaparāoa is not recommended; in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of suitability of the current infrastructure. The inefficiency and cost of “creating” suitable infrastructure The cessation of current use introduces risk WRT NZDF personnel not being able to isolate following MIQ duty before returning regular duties. Additionally ongoing readiness would likely be affected. 	<p>Not suitable.</p>

Annex Two: Support services available across government

Support services available

53. This annex provides a list of available support services across government that will be provided to the evacuees once they are in the Nesuto Hotel and Apartments. The All of Government - Afghanistan Evacuation - *Accommodation and Settlement Senior Officials Group* will continue to work collectively to ensure adequate support service provision for the evacuees.
54. Officials will undertake further assessments to determine the nature of support required, for example, what income support, if any, would be available; potential funding requirements; and, how this support would be operationalised and administered. In addition, further assessment will be needed to determine the nature and complexity of support that this group will require, and the funding and workforce requirements needed to give effect to this support. For example, where community-based support is required, assessment of workforce capacity, additional resourcing and funding for Community Connector support will be imperative.

Ministry of Social Development

55. The Ministry of Social Development provides:
 - a. Income Support - The Social Security Act 2018 limits the general provision of income support to Residence Class visa holders (resident or permanent resident visa) or New Zealand citizens, who also meet the criteria for being ordinarily and continuously resident in New Zealand. New Zealand citizens or Residence Class visa holders that do not meet these criteria may be eligible for some income support on the grounds of hardship. Temporary visa holders are generally not eligible for income support; however, some assistance may be available to temporary visa holders who are applying for a residence class visa and are compelled to remain in New Zealand while waiting for the outcome, due to unforeseen circumstances.
 - b. a range of employment and community supports available. Employment supports include Flexi-Wage subsidies, Mana in Mahi, and work brokerage services (depending on individual eligibility).

Ministry of Health

56. The health needs of the evacuees (including mental health) remain largely unknown. The evacuees have not received any pre-visa health checks and only basic health assessments have been carried out in MIQ. Officials are working to find ways to do the type and level of health screening and services that will be required in the interim accommodation setting.
57. Officials are aware of the pressures on health care providers, particularly in the Auckland region, and are looking at a range of options to meet the potential health needs of the evacuees.

New Zealand Police

58. The New Zealand Police provide a range of navigation, legal and crime prevention services to new migrants and refugees. Crime prevention advice is a key enabler to safety (e.g. caution when walking downtown at night, keeping safe, when to call 111/105). They also have a strong Ethnic Liaison Officer network in Auckland that would be the contact points with this group as and when required. This will support new migrants to understand that policing is by consent in Aotearoa and the services and approach will be quite different from those that they may be accustomed to in their original countries. In addition, they have deep relationships with the Muslim community and their leaders and can facilitate access to those networks as needed.

Ministry of Education

59. While families are in temporary accommodation the Ministry of Education can provide education/recreation packs for specific age groups (budget dependent and essential worker status dependent).
60. If families have access to televisions they can also access the Education programmes available.
61. The Ministry of Education can provide devices to make communication and access to educational material possible (budget and availability dependent).
62. When families move to their resettlement location the Ministry of Education's Senior Advisors Refugee and Migrant in the regions can support students to enrol in school. The Ministry can support schools with advice and guidance about working with the children. It will be important that we have the information about who the families are, and where they are moving to.
63. If there are any school age children with learning support needs which are known it will be important that education advisors know about these so that the Ministry can help schools to prepare to receive the students.

Ministry of Ethnic Communities

64. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities is currently engaging with Afghan community leaders, influencers and grassroots members, women and youth included. These engagements are being done as part of the All-of-Government efforts to support the evacuees to successfully resettle in New Zealand.
65. The Ministry is also facilitating the translation of All-of-Government key messages into the main languages: Pashto, Farsi and Dari for sharing more widely with the communities, and for New Zealanders. The Ministry has indicated that funding to support further need for interpreters in Pashto, Farsi and Dari may also be required.
66. An initial \$500,000 set aside to support ethnic and faith community organisations who are providing counselling, wellbeing and cultural support would greatly assist.

Oranga Tamariki

67. As part of the All-of-Government response, Oranga Tamariki will provide care or protection, youth justice for children and families in New Zealand. In the event concerns were identified regarding the safety and care of a child who has been evacuated from Afghanistan, Oranga Tamariki will work closely with relevant agencies to ensure the safety and care of the child.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Afghanistan – immigration response options post-evacuation

Date:	17 September 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-0859

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	<p>Agree to the focus of a medium-term response to the Afghanistan situation.</p> <p>Indicate which cohorts (if any) you would like to consider for a targeted immigration response.</p> <p>Forward the briefing to Ministers with Power to Act for Afghanistan.</p>	20 September 2021
Hon Phil Twyford Associate Minister of Immigration	Copy for your information	NA

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Andrew Craig	Manager, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 901 1245	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Bronwyn Chapman	Senior Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 897 6561		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Afghanistan – immigration response options post-evacuation

Date:	17 September 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-0859

Purpose

This paper provides advice on the next phase of New Zealand’s humanitarian immigration response to the situation in Afghanistan. It sets out additional response options to this situation, and seeks an indication of any options you would like officials to develop for further consideration. More comprehensive All-of-Government advice on the next phase of the Afghanistan response will be provided in due course.

Executive summary

MBIE recommends that any ongoing humanitarian response focuses on supporting New Zealanders and those already provided with visas (for supporting agencies or by the Associate Minister of Immigration) to resettle if they are able to leave. This is a potentially large group that could challenge isolation and settlement capacity, though it remains uncertain how many will arrive or when.

This short- to medium- term focus can be supplemented with an increased proportion of Afghan refugees within the Refugee Quota Programme from July 2022 subject to input on other humanitarian priorities from the United Nations Refugee Agency.

We do not recommend any further bespoke humanitarian response at this time due to the uncertainty about impacts, and precedents for responses to other humanitarian crises.

Context for any humanitarian immigration response

Cabinet previously agreed to resettle Afghan nationals who supported the New Zealand presence in Afghanistan where being identified in relation to that work means there is a threat to their safety in Afghanistan [CAB-21-MIN-0323 and CMG-21-MIN-0001 refer]. You have agreed to grant residence visas for eligible individuals and their immediate (partner and dependent children) family members [briefing 2122-0634 refers], and offer residence to everyone who has been evacuated to New Zealand or granted a Critical Purpose Visitor Visa (CPVV) to travel here (with residence granted when they have made it to New Zealand).

The current political, security, and humanitarian situation on the ground in Afghanistan is complex and uncertain. There are significant challenges impacting the ability for the remainder of New Zealanders and other eligible Afghan nationals with New Zealand visas to depart the country, and it is uncertain how many of these will be able to depart either directly or via third countries. These people should remain the primary focus for Government support given that New Zealand has already accepted responsibility for them.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has provided initial advice to Ministers regarding the level and nature of ongoing support for those New Zealanders and certain eligible Afghan nationals (including those that supported New Zealand agencies or who were approved by the Associate Minister of immigration) to travel to New Zealand (see *Afghanistan Response: New Zealand support for New Zealand Citizens, Permanent Residents and Afghan Visa Holders* dated 9 September).

- Further advice will be provided to Ministers regarding the ongoing and the end-to-end requirements for those individuals to travel to, and be settled in New Zealand (ie including

travel support out of Afghanistan as well as requirements at the New Zealand end, such as MIQ availability, border issues, and resettlement support). It also remains uncertain what capacity demands are going to be generated by this group (eg how many ultimately arrive in New Zealand even with assistance and support made available).

- This cohort of eligible Afghan visa holders (including those who are still to depart) will be offered residence when they arrive in New Zealand, and therefore are not counted under the existing refugee quota programme.

This paper considers what additional humanitarian options might be possible for those Afghan nationals who are outside of the current scope of New Zealand Government support.

Options for additional humanitarian immigration responses to the Afghan situation

The New Zealand Government has generally focussed on responding to significant international humanitarian crises through the policy settings for the three-year Refugee Quota Programme (RQP) in support of wider international responses (such as those by the United Nations), such as for the Syrian Crisis. In light of New Zealand's two-decades long (military and development) involvement in Afghanistan, the Government may wish to consider an expanded scope for humanitarian immigration responses, noting the support already provided to those who have directly supported New Zealand efforts such as the Afghan Interpreters Resettled in New Zealand and the recent additional evacuation group.

In considering potential options, the COVID-19 environment creates a number of constraints that impact on the viability of potential options. MIQ availability is already limited for priority Afghan entries and additional places necessary to support any options may not be able to be secured. The current Afghanistan operation is also placing additional demand on Government and NGO settlement services, short- and long-term accommodation, and on psychosocial support, and this demand is expected to constrain the size and scope of any further potential options in the short to medium term.

Two primary areas are available for additional humanitarian responses – using the refugee quota, or through bespoke assistance for particular groups:

Using the refugee quota

In order to be recognised as a refugee or protected person, a person needs to be outside their country of origin – this means Afghan nationals remaining in Afghanistan are not refugees. If you wish to provide an additional response for refugees, we recommend that it is delivered through our existing refugee programmes, which are primarily based on United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) referrals. UNHCR has robust processes for identifying and prioritising need. It would be challenging for New Zealand to establish an appropriately robust process for identifying which individual refugees to resettle outside this process.

There is no capacity to increase the number of Afghan refugees through the Refugee Quota Programme (RQP) this financial year (July 2021 – June 2022), because the quota process takes 6-12 months from UNHCR referral to the refugee arriving in New Zealand, and due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on our ability to select refugees and support safe travel to New Zealand.

An increase in New Zealand's intake of Afghan refugees could be considered as part of the RQP for the next three years (July 2022 – June 2025). The quota is due to be set in March 2022, however, if you wish to signal your commitment to the refugee response by increasing the number of places available to Afghan refugees, we recommend bringing forward decisions.

Final decisions on the quota will need to take into account advice from the UNHCR on allocating quota space to Afghan nationals in the context of competing international priorities, and consideration of the ability of different settlement locations to receive Afghan refugees (as settlement centres are not necessarily set up to support all nationalities). We will aim to provide

this advice in time for a decision on the quota to be made in mid to late October. In the meantime, you could signal publicly that you are considering increasing the number of places available to Afghan nationals through the quota programme, subject to UNHCR feedback.

The extended Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) pilot may also offer some limited solutions for small numbers of Afghan refugees, if sponsoring organisations and Afghan refugees who meet the eligibility criteria can be identified.

Bespoke assistance

Border exceptions and Ministerial Intervention can allow people to travel to New Zealand for humanitarian reasons. In the current situation, there are several distinct groups that you may wish to consider for bespoke or targeted humanitarian options outside of existing UNHCR refugee processes.

Any bespoke arrangements would need to be carefully designed, considering priority of New Zealand's responsibility, the degree of people's connection to New Zealand, other humanitarian priorities, and precedent risks. Any arrangement could involve establishing specific mechanisms or quotas for groups, and would include a number of challenges.

While additional bespoke arrangements could be developed, officials do not recommend this approach, on the basis that:

- there is still an uncertain number of Afghan nationals already granted visas for resettlement support who may arrive and large numbers will challenge resettlement support capacity (with further uncertainty on numbers resulting from requests lodged or expected to be lodged)
- potential bespoke arrangements are likely to be unfair to other migrant communities not able to receive similar treatment
- the arrangements may disadvantage higher need groups, such as UNHCR mandated refugees
- constraints on the ability to exit Afghanistan and travel to New Zealand are likely to limit the practicality of options and potential benefits, and
- it creates a precedent risk for future humanitarian crises.

Officials recommend a continuing focus on those New Zealand is already responsible for, and any who meet the existing humanitarian border exception (requiring a strong connection to New Zealand). You can consider a small number of individual cases for intervention, but we recommend that this channel is used only in a small number of cases for exceptional circumstances.

However, if you did wish to consider bespoke arrangements, officials consider small and capped categories and border exceptions could be established for one or more of the following groups:

- current Afghan applicants for the Refugee Family Support Category and/or and Parent Resident Visa Category who are able to depart the country
- extended family of New Zealand citizens and residents in Afghanistan
- New Zealand temporary visa holders in Afghanistan.

If you seek to progress any of these options, officials will prepare further advice, including potential scope, criteria, numbers, the type of potential offer (eg residence), and the potential settlement support available for each selected option. While other groups are likely to seek bespoke arrangements (or have requests made on their behalf), officials recommend you do not consider arrangements for any additional groups.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Note** that you and Ministers with Power to Act Ministers for Afghanistan have agreed to resettle and provide residency for people who:
1. worked for or with the New Zealand Defence Force, Police, or a New Zealand entity in Afghanistan, together with those who materially supported the Operation Burnham Inquiry
 2. are or were at risk of harm as a result of this association should they remain in Afghanistan
 3. for whom no other country has a greater level of responsibility [briefing 2122-0654 refers], and
 4. people granted a critical purpose visa to exist Afghanistan before 12 September, and those on other visas who were evacuated to New Zealand before 12 September [Briefing 2122-0782 refers].

Noted

- b **Note** that the current security, humanitarian, and political situation in Afghanistan is complex with departure options currently limited to challenging, uncertain and dangerous land border crossings, in addition to uncertainty to what extent the Taliban will uphold their commitment to “safe passage” out of Afghanistan (particularly for Afghan nationals holding visas for third countries)

Noted

Groups with visas related to the initial response phase

- c **Note** that advice has been provided to Power to Act Ministers regarding the level and nature of ongoing support for those New Zealanders, their immediate families, and certain eligible Afghan national granted New Zealand visas to depart Afghanistan, and that further advice will be provided outlining the end-to-end requirements for those individuals to be resettled into New Zealand (MFAT paper *Afghanistan Response: New Zealand support for New Zealand Citizens, Permanent Residents and Afghan Visa Holders* dated 9 September)

Noted

- d **Agree** the main priority in the next phase of the response is providing support to New Zealanders, their immediate families, and people granted visas during the initial phase to enter New Zealand (as noted in Recommendation C above)

Agree / Disagree

- e Either

1. **Agree** to provide an open commitment for those issued visas during the initial response in Afghanistan while a risk of harm remains

Agree / Disagree

Or (MBIE recommended)

2. **Direct** officials to reassess in six months the need for any visa extension for those issued visas during the initial response in Afghanistan who have been unable to depart

Agree / Disagree

Other potential groups

- f **Note** in addition to the situation in Afghanistan a number of challenges exist that may constrain further humanitarian options for those Afghan nationals (not included in the cohort)

referenced in Recommendation C above) seeking support, including MIQ places, Crown and NGO settlement support, and short and long-term accommodation.

Noted

- g **Note** New Zealand's previous immigration response to international humanitarian crises has largely been to utilise the government-agreed policy settings within the three-year Refugee Quota Programme

Noted

- h **Note** there is significant risk of under delivering any practical additional bespoke humanitarian immigration options due to the challenges for eligible persons to depart Afghanistan, and officials therefore recommend that any additional initiatives be specifically and clearly focussed on the medium to long-term

Noted

- i **Note** that 68 Afghan refugees are planned to be resettled in New Zealand as part of the October and November intakes of the Refugee Quota Programme, with a further 21 approved for future intakes, and 176 currently working through the decision-making process.

Noted

- j **Note** that there is no capacity to increase the number of Afghan refugees resettled through the Refugee Quota Programme for the remainder of this financial year.

Noted

- k **Indicate** whether you would like to increase the number of Afghan refugees resettled in New Zealand as part of the Refugee Quota Programme for the next three years (July 2022 – June 2025) and bring forward decisions on the quota to October, subject to receiving advice from UNHCR about allocating quota space to Afghan nationals in the context of competing international priorities.

Increase the number of Afghan refugees settled in New Zealand: Yes / No

Bring forward decisions to October, subject to receiving UNHCR advice: Yes / No

- l **Note** that the extended Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship pilot may also offer some limited solutions for small numbers of Afghan refugees, if sponsoring organisations and Afghan refugees who meet the eligibility criteria can be identified.

Noted

- m Either (MBIE recommended)

1. **Agree** not to establish any bespoke humanitarian response categories and use discretion and the existing humanitarian border exception for cases for Afghan national at this time

Agree / Disagree

Or

2. **Indicate** which group(s) you would like further advice on options for bespoke (likely capped) categories:

- i. Current Afghan applicants for the Refugee Family Support Category

Yes / No

- ii. Current Afghan applicants for the Parent Resident Visa Category

Yes / No

- iii. Extended family of New Zealand citizens and residents in Afghanistan

Yes / No

iv. People who provided support to New Zealand agencies but did not apply by the cut-off date

Yes / No

v. Temporary visa holders in New Zealand (outside of standard asylum process)

Yes / No

vi. Other: _____

Yes / No

n Either (MBIE recommended)

1. **Agree** to close the current border exception for New Zealand temporary visa holders in Afghanistan to reflect its original purpose as a short-term evacuation response

Agree / Disagree

Or

2. **Agree** to leave the current border exception for New Zealand temporary visa holders in Afghanistan open to allow any visa holders as of 18 August 2021 who are able to leave Afghanistan to enter New Zealand

Agree / Disagree

o **Agree** to forward this briefing and your decisions to Ministers with Power to Act for Afghanistan

Agree / Disagree

Andrew Craig
Manager, Immigration (Skills and Residence) Policy
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

17 September 2021

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Background

1. On 16 August 2021, in light of the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, Cabinet agreed to deploy New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) resources to assist in the international evacuation effort [CAB-21-MIN-0323 refers]. The main focus for New Zealand in the initial evacuation phase was on the following groups:
 - a. New Zealand citizens, residents, and their immediate family members
 - b. Afghan nationals who worked for or with the NZDF, Police or another identifiable New Zealand entity or provided material assistance to the Operation Burnham inquiry (collectively referred to as NZ Inc for the purposes of this paper), and were at risk of harm as a result of being associated with New Zealand through this connection. Cabinet also required that no other country owed the individual a greater duty over and above New Zealand. Requests for inclusion in this group closed at 23:59 on 25 August 2021 [CAB-21-MIN-0323 and CMG-21-MIN-001 refer]
 - c. Afghan nationals granted a visa at the discretion of the Associate Minister of Immigration
 - d. other people in Afghanistan with a valid New Zealand visa. This includes people on temporary visas and unactivated residence visas (ie where the holder has not been in New Zealand while holding a residence visa) who would otherwise be subject to border restrictions. Cabinet agreed that this cohort could be granted a border exception to enter New Zealand [CMG-21-MIN-0001 refers].
2. The New Zealand Defence Force led an evacuation effort from 19-26 August, concluding when flights out of Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) in Kabul were no longer viable. In total, 393 people were evacuated to New Zealand, however the short window available for departures meant that New Zealand has not been able to evacuate all those who wanted and were eligible to enter New Zealand.
3. Cabinet has requested that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Defence report back to Cabinet as soon as possible on [CAB-21-MIN-0247]:
 - a. the number and immigration status of the evacuees and the next steps for their resettlement to New Zealand (advice on this was provided in BR 2122-0782)
 - b. the next steps to assist those remaining in Afghanistan who are eligible to come to New Zealand to leave
 - c. New Zealand's response to the overall refugee situation in respect of Afghanistan.
4. This briefing sets out advice for the next of New Zealand's immigration response, including assisting New Zealanders and other priority groups to leave Afghanistan and come to New Zealand, our approach to resettling Afghan refugees, and options for providing support to other groups.

Political and Security Situation

5. On 30 August, the first phase of the international response effort from HKIA concluded, thereby closing the initial window for air evacuations out of Kabul. At the conclusion of the initial operation on 30 August, 393 New Zealanders and eligible Afghan nationals had been supported to depart Afghanistan for New Zealand¹; however, a significant number of New Zealanders and other eligible Afghan nationals with New Zealand visas hoping to depart were unable to be evacuated in the short window available.

¹ We understand this is now 399 evacuees as at 16 September.

6. The security situation in Afghanistan remains complex and presents a range of still emerging risks including health, security, operational, reputational, legal, and financial.

s 6(a)

8. The political and security situation will also impact operational options. Work is still underway to make HKIA operational and despite rumours of commercial flights resuming, there is considerable uncertainty as to when or if this will become a viable option for international departures in near term. Options for departing Afghanistan are currently limited to challenging, uncertain and dangerous land border crossings (with only Iran and Pakistan currently accepting people at the border), and it is unclear to what extent the Taliban will uphold their commitment to “safe passage” out of Afghanistan, particularly for Afghan nationals holding visas for third countries.
9. Meanwhile, urgent planning continues for the next phase of the All-of-Government operation to support those remaining individuals (including New Zealand citizens, permanent residents, eligible visa holders and immediate family members) to depart Afghanistan.
10. Given the urgent and unique circumstances facing New Zealanders and certain Afghan visa holders, officials have recommended that Ministers establish a general principle of equal treatment for those eligible individuals² seeking assistance to depart Afghanistan for Aotearoa New Zealand. Should Ministers approve this policy, then further advice regarding the policy parameters and the financial implications of this policy would be provided to Ministers separately.
11. MFAT has stood up a new taskforce to provide operational support and assistance those eligible individuals and families who are seeking to leave Afghanistan for New Zealand. This support includes exploring options to depart Afghanistan, transits through third countries, and onward travel to New Zealand. As with the earlier evacuations from Kabul, working with our close security and consular partners will be critical to this effort.
12. Given the dynamic operating environment, the work of this taskforce is likely to evolve over coming weeks. The initial action is to deploy MFAT personnel on scoping missions to Islamabad and Doha (given New Zealand does not have a resident diplomatic presence in these locations).
13. The humanitarian crisis is significant, with flow on effects for security within and outside Afghanistan’s borders, as well as in the broader region. Prospects for at risk individuals who remain in Afghanistan – notably women, girls, human rights defenders, and those who assisted international forces – are of deep concern.
14. To date, New Zealand has responded to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan with a contribution of \$6million, with \$1.5million directed to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UNHCR, UNICEF and the UN Population Fund (UNPF) respectively.

² This Policy applies to the following individuals: New Zealand citizens and their immediate family members; New Zealand permanent residents and their immediate family members; Afghan nationals with New Zealand visas granted under section 61 Immigration Act 2009 (due to their association with the NZDF or other New Zealand Government agencies in Afghanistan – per Cabinet’s 16 August 2021 criteria); Afghan nationals with New Zealand visas issued by Associate Minister of Immigration under s61 Immigration Act 2009 between 17 and 28 August 2021.

15. The UN has put out an urgent appeal for an additional USD\$606 million of funding, noting that Afghanistan stands at the precipice of humanitarian catastrophe. With half the population already below the poverty line, the UN has reported that 97-98% of the population are at risk of falling into poverty if humanitarian and development aid is reduced.
16. New Zealand's early and generous response has been positively received by the international community; however it is possible that we will be called on for further assistance at a later stage. s 9(2)(g)(i)

Beyond the announcement of financial contributions, New Zealand has also delivered joint statements alongside our international partners.

The main priority in the next phase is providing support to New Zealanders, their immediate families, and people granted visas during the evacuation phase

17. Following the completion of the evacuation phase of the response, there is a necessary shift to considering the likely longer-term options for responding to this crisis. In considering options for targeting and phasing any longer term responses there are some general groups to consider:
 - a. New Zealand citizens and residents and their immediate families (ie partners and dependent children) (as at 16 September, approximately 200 individuals remain in Afghanistan)
 - b. Non New Zealanders that New Zealand has responsibilities for, including people who were granted a special visa under s61 of the Immigration Act 2009 in the initial evacuation stage and therefore have an expectation of assistance from New Zealand:
 - i. the people who provided support to "NZ Inc" agencies (581 people have been granted visas but were not evacuated, and a number of visa requests made before the deadline remain to be processed)
 - ii. people who were granted a visa by the Associate Minister of Immigration between 17 and 28 August (94 people were not evacuated)
 - iii. other Immigration decisions (with 43 people approved for humanitarian EOIs, and 53 other border exception EOIs approved as of 14 September)
 - iv. those still in the pipeline who will meet the resettlement or other humanitarian criteria (with 433 humanitarian and 50 border exception EOIs, and 10 INZ s61a or CPVV applications on hand as of 14 September, with estimates of a further 150 requests across agencies not currently in the pipeline)
 - c. Those with some connection to New Zealand (eg have extended family in New Zealand), and
 - d. General humanitarian concerns (those with no New Zealand connection)

Work is underway by agencies to address barriers to providing entry and support

18. We recommend the next phase of any longer-term response focuses on ensuring New Zealanders and people previously granted a visa under 17 (b) above are able to travel to New Zealand (and secure residence) if they are able to leave Afghanistan and get to New Zealand.
19. To assist this, a range of issues are being considered by agencies. Such issues include health-related settings that may represent a barrier, including pre-departure COVID-19 test requirements, and restrictions on travel from Pakistan (currently classified as a very high COVID-19 risk country, with strict travel controls that may impact its ability to be a departure point for priority groups). Officials are working to resolve this issue, and further advice will be provided to Ministers as required.
20. MIQ requirements also represent a barrier for these people to travel to New Zealand. Following the conclusion of the initial response phase, there is no longer a specific allocation of places for those resettling in or returning to New Zealand as a direct result of the Afghanistan situation. Further, under current settings, New Zealand citizens/residents and their families may meet the criteria for emergency allocation, but this is not assured. Those entering under a CPVV or other temporary visa categories³ are ineligible for emergency allocation rooms (as they are not New Zealand citizens or residents) and must obtain a voucher through the normal Managed Isolation Allocation System online process.
21. To address this, MIQ officials are working with INZ to identify options to facilitate easier and more timely allocations for individuals and families granted entry visas to resettle in New Zealand as a result of the events in Afghanistan. Further advice will be provided to Ministers as required.
22. Despite this work, the challenges facing these people create uncertainty on volumes and timing of arrivals – this could be larger cohorts if it becomes safe for charter or commercial flights to resume from Afghanistan, or be very few if air travel and land borders are restricted.
23. This uncertainty on volumes and arrivals of those approved for entry to New Zealand is further compounded by the unknown number of people who may be approved from outstanding pipeline. As noted at 17(b)(iv) above, approximately 650 further applications were awaiting decision, or are expected to be submitted for consideration as at 14 September. The numbers approved from this pipeline, and their potential arrival further represent significant potential support demands the Government will need to manage.

Potential future need to keep pathway for visa holders open

24. Visas issued to those in the initial response phase or by the Associate Minister of Immigration are valid for nine months from the date of issue, with holders having a further six months from activation to apply for residency. It is currently unclear how many of the approximately 675 holders not currently in New Zealand⁴ will be able to enter the country within this timeframe.
25. In light of the uncertainty, you could either extend the timeframes for these visas and the consequential residency application period outright, or consider an extension once more is known about the situation and the ability of holders to arrive in New Zealand. Officials recommend reviewing the situation in six months in light of a risk assessment and travel options. It is likely the offer would remain open (with the date of first entry for CPVV holders

³ Including those who meet the Cabinet criteria of having worked for a New Zealand Agency, and those granted under Ministerial discretions exercised by the Associate Minister of Immigration

⁴ As set out previously, this includes the 581 people granted visas with an expectation of assistance and the 94 granted visas by the Associate Minister of immigration

being extended). MFAT has recommended reviewing the offer of consular support to these Afghan nationals at the same point.

New Zealand's immigration responses to previous humanitarian crises have generally focused on the Refugee Quota Programme

26. In recent history, the New Zealand Government has responded to significant international humanitarian crises largely by utilising the government-agreed policy settings within the three-year RQP. An example of this was utilising the RQP to support wider international refugee crisis responses to the Syrian Crisis. New Zealand has not generally utilised bespoke immigration/resettlement mechanisms to respond to such humanitarian crises.
27. The RQP enables UNHCR-referred refugees with priority protection needs requiring resettlement in a safe third country to be resettled in New Zealand. In the Syrian response, Cabinet agreed to places within and above the RQP being allocated to Syrian refugees over a three-year period. These places, combined with an additional cohort of Syrian refugees over and above the annual refugee quota at the time, enabled some 750 Syrian refugees to be resettled in New Zealand between 2015/16 and 2017/18 [CAB-15-MIN-0057 and CAB-16-MIN-0271 refer].
28. The only recent bespoke response to a humanitarian situation (domestic) was the establishment of the Christchurch Response Visa to support bereaved family members and wounded victims of the Christchurch Mosques Terror Attacks.
29. New Zealand has offered bespoke options to a limited set of Afghanistan nationals before by offering resettlement for a cohort of Afghan nationals who provided interpretation and other support to New Zealand personnel in Afghanistan. An offer was made of the equivalent of three years' salary to relocate within Afghanistan, or relocation and resettlement in New Zealand for the worker and their immediate family. Between 2012 and 2014 44 interpreters and 96 of their immediate family members were resettled here. The recent resettlement criteria to those who supported New Zealand agencies was made on a similar basis.
30. However, due to New Zealand's military and development involvement in Afghanistan, you may wish to expand the scope of any immigration response offered in this instance.

Our immigration response will need to be balanced against constraints in MIQ and settlement support

31. Because there is no MIQ allocation for individuals entering New Zealand to resettle, any programme or immigration response will need to take account of the current constraints on MIQ capacity (particularly as existing numbers in the pipeline already could exceed available capacity for MIQ). This may be a minor issue if those entering arrive in families of small groups, however large cohorts will require a decision to allocate MIQ space (potentially as a class exception) in order to facilitate their entry.
32. In addition, any expanded immigration response (beyond Afghan nationals already granted visas who are yet to enter New Zealand) will need to consider potential pressure placed on Crown and NGO agencies including resettlement services, short and long-term accommodation and psychosocial support.
33. A co-ordinated multi-agency approach is being undertaken to ensure that Afghan evacuees have the appropriate settlement support (including health and mental health, education, social services and housing) while in Managed Isolation and, where necessary, in the community. For example, as part of that approach, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is co-ordinating access to social services, including financial, employment and housing support. More specifically, in the community, MSD Community Connectors provide support to access government agency and community-based settlement support services. A multi-

agency working group has been established to support evacuees, where required, to access to appropriate housing in communities either through Kāinga Ora or accessing the private housing market.

Options for an increased refugee response

34. Refugees and protected people are people unable to safely return to their country of origin. It is important to note that, in order to be recognised as a refugee or protected person, the person needs to be outside their country of origin – this means **that Afghan nationals remaining in Afghanistan are not refugees or protected persons** (as per the Immigration Act 2009) and cannot be resettled directly from Afghanistan through the refugee programme. Those individuals who *are* able to depart Afghanistan to a third country could, however, be eligible for the purposes of New Zealand’s refugee programme if referred to us by the UNHCR.
35. Prior to the events of August 2021, there were already 2.2 million Afghan refugees from previous waves of violence, spanning back several decades, registered with the UNHCR in Iran, Pakistan and other countries in the region. The UNHCR estimates that there could be up to 515,000 newly displaced Afghan refugees fleeing across borders this year in a worst-case scenario.⁵
36. s 6(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] A number of these countries have a component of their annual resettlement quota reserved for emergency response, similar to New Zealand’s large-scale refugee crisis quota allocation (200 places in the 2021/2022 financial year). Australia has announced that at least 3000 humanitarian places will be allocated to Afghan nationals within Australia’s 13,750 annual refugee quota, but that this number is set to increase. It is not yet clear how partners will operationalise this alongside UNHCR processes.

Our existing refugee response will include some Afghan nationals

37. There are three main pathways for refugees to settle in New Zealand:

Refugee Quota Programme

38. One of the durable protection solutions for refugees is resettlement in a safe third country, like New Zealand. The UNHCR refers refugees who have priority protection needs requiring resettlement in a safe third country. The UNHCR identifies refugees for resettlement according to internationally accepted guidelines that take account of physical and legal protection needs, as well as family reunification.
39. Refugees referred to New Zealand by the UNHCR are resettled through the RQP. The UNHCR refers refugees for resettlement that align with New Zealand’s agreed RQP. All quota refugees are granted permanent residence status, and complete a five-week reception programme at Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa (the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre) to prepare them for their new lives in New Zealand. Following this, quota refugees are settled in 13 settlement locations across New Zealand and provided with settlement support for up to 12 months.
40. From July 2011 to June 2021, the RQP has resettled 945 Afghan refugees (11.6 per cent of all quota refugees over this time period). In the most recent financial year (2020/2021), 29.7 per cent of refugees resettled through the RQP were Afghans.

⁵ Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan, July – December 2021, UNHCR

41. The RQP is decided by the Government in three-year cycles. For the current three-year cycle (July 2019 – June 2022), Cabinet agreed to a quota of 1,500 places annually, allocated according to the international regional breakdown below [CAB-19-MIN-0468 refers].⁶

Region of Asylum	Proportion (%)
Asia-Pacific	50
Americas	20
Middle East	15
Africa	15

42. Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on our ability to select refugees and support safe travel to New Zealand, the quota was not met in 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 financial year, and Ministers agreed that only 750-1,000 quota spaces would be filled for the 2021/2022 financial year [2021-3218 refers]. Furthermore, upcoming quota intakes for 2021/2022 have been deferred as a result of the Level 4 lockdown in Auckland and challenges in locating appropriate housing in settlement locations, which may impact on our ability to meet the revised 750-1,000 quota spaces this financial year.
43. Sixty-eight Afghan refugees are planned to be resettled in New Zealand as part of the October and November intakes, with a further 21 approved for future intakes, and 176 currently working through the decision-making process.

Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category

44. The Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) category is additional and complementary to the RQP and enables New Zealand-based community organisations to sponsor refugees for resettlement.
45. An initial pilot was run in 2018, and this has been extended for a further three years from July 2021 – June 2024. The extension of the pilot will enable up to 50 sponsored refugees to be resettled in New Zealand in each of the three years. On arrival, sponsored refugees are supported to settle directly into the community by their approved community organisation sponsors. CORS refugees are granted permanent residence and are eligible to access government funded services (eg income and housing support from MSD).
46. To be eligible for resettlement under the CORS category, the principal and secondary applicants must be refugees, and the principal applicant must have a basic understanding of English, a minimum of three years' work experience (or a qualification requiring at least two years' tertiary study), an acceptable standard of health and be aged between 18 and 45. Approved community organisations will either be able to nominate (name) eligible refugees to sponsor, or sponsor refugees identified by UNHCR.
47. We anticipate that the first sponsored refugees under the extended pilot will arrive in New Zealand from mid-2022, subject to the effects of COVID-19 on refugee selection and safe travel to New Zealand.

Convention refugees

48. As a signatory, New Zealand is obligated under United Nations Conventions to consider claims from people who claim refugee or protected person status while in New Zealand. Refugee or protection status can be claimed on arrival at a New Zealand airport or port,

⁶ Note that the regional breakdown is based on the region where the refugee has claimed asylum, not where they originated. Afghan refugees could therefore potentially be referred from any region, but are most likely to be referred from Asia-Pacific (from Malaysia and Indonesia).

however the majority of people who claim asylum in New Zealand arrive in the country on valid visas and make a claim at a later time while living in the community.

49. Once their claim is approved (Convention refugees), refugees and protected people are eligible to apply for a residence visa. Convention refugees are eligible to access the same government funded services as other residents and New Zealand citizens. Work is underway on potential coordinated settlement support services for convention refugees.
50. There is no quota or limit on the number of claims for refugee or protected person approved annually— all claims lodged in New Zealand must be determined. There are currently 446 Afghan passport holders on a temporary visa in New Zealand who could potentially submit an asylum claim (some may be eligible for the one-off residence visa recently agreed by Cabinet, but we expect these numbers to be small [CAB-21-MIN-0359 refers]).

The intake of Afghan refugees could be increased in the next three year quota programme (starting from July 2022)

51. We recommend that any additional refugee response is delivered through our existing refugee programmes, which are primarily based on UNHCR referrals. UNHCR has robust processes for identifying and prioritising need. It would be challenging for New Zealand to establish an appropriately robust process for identifying which individual refugees to resettle outside the UNHCR process.
52. Any increase in Afghan refugees will not necessarily be people recently departed from Afghanistan, as UNHCR refers refugees for resettlement based on priority resettlement need. However, any resettlement from regions that Afghans are fleeing to will help the asylum countries, accommodate newly-arrived refugees.
53. It is not possible to increase the number of Afghan refugees resettled through the quota programme before the end of the financial year (30 June 2022). This is because of the limit of 750-1,000 quota refugees for this financial year as a result of COVID-19 related limitations, and because the quota process takes 6-12 months from UNHCR referral to the refugee arriving in New Zealand.⁷
54. However an increase in the number of places available to Afghan refugees could be considered when setting the quota for the next three years (July 2022 – June 2025). Options for increasing the number of Afghan refugees in the quota include:
 - a. using the large-scale refugee crisis quota allocation for Afghan refugees (up to 200 places under the current quota, but this could be increased)
 - b. allocating more general quota spaces to Afghan refugees and/or refugees resettled from the Asia-Pacific region (which is the region most likely to include Afghan refugees)
 - c. increasing the number of places for the women at risk sub-category (currently at least 150 places).
55. In addition, you could consider increasing the overall size of the quota. This would be constrained by MIQ availability and capacity at Te Āhuru Mōwai initially, and housing and settlement support thereafter. It would also require significant additional funding.

⁷ Please note that officials previously provided advice that up to 500 additional Afghan nationals could be added to the remaining intakes this financial year (talking points for the Cabinet meeting of 19 August 2021). This advice was incorrect – the additional 500 places were available to temporarily house evacuees outside the UNHCR process at Te Āhuru Mōwai, and could not have been filled with UNHCR-referred refugees for the reasons outlined in this section. We are reassessing what capacity there is at Te Āhuru Mōwai to house evacuees in future in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 level 4 lockdown in Auckland.

56. It is also important to note that the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on INZ's ability to select refugees and support safe travel to New Zealand may impact on the ability of Afghan refugees to take up any additional quota allocation.
57. The next three-year quota is due to be set by March 2022, however, if you wish to signal your commitment to the refugee response by increasing the number of places available to Afghan refugees, we recommend bringing forward decisions on the quota.
58. Any increase in the number of quota spaces set aside for Afghan refugees will need to be considered in the context of other refugee groups with similar levels of need. We are currently testing with UNHCR timeframes for their submission about international priorities and their views on using the large scale refugee crisis quota allocation for Afghan refugees. We also need to consider what the current constraints are in terms of settlement support, as not all resettlement centres are set up to support Afghan refugees (as opposed to refugees from other areas), and what would be required to appropriately prepare additional settlement locations to receive Afghan refugees.
59. We will aim to provide this advice in time for a decision on the quota to be made in mid to late October (but this will need to be confirmed based on how quickly the UNHCR may be able to provide a submission). In the meantime, you could signal you are considering increasing the number of places available to Afghan nationals through the quota programme, subject to UNHCR feedback about the highest priority regions or crises.

It could also be possible to increase the number of places in the CORS programme

60. The extended CORS pilot may offer some limited solutions for small numbers of Afghans, if sponsoring organisations and Afghan refugees who meet the eligibility criteria can be identified. However, it is important to note that we have not completed a full evaluation of the outcomes for the first cohort from 2018, so have limited information about outcomes for refugees placed through the programme.
61. Additional spaces through CORS would require additional MIQ capacity, and an increase in Crown funding for the programme (while settlement costs are met by the sponsoring community organisations, the Crown funds some programme administration costs).

Options for immigration responses for other groups

While specific options could be developed, officials do not recommend bespoke humanitarian immigration arrangements

62. Humanitarian border exceptions and Ministerial intervention have been used on a case-by-case basis to allow people to travel to New Zealand⁸; however, you have indicated in feedback on the residence options briefing your preference for the use of this approach to be limited. In the current situation, there are several distinct groups that you may wish to consider and form a clear view on whether they should be included in any bespoke or targeted humanitarian options outside of existing UNHCR refugee processes.
63. The size of the expected group will impact on the potential approach. While individual decisions can be made via Ministerial discretion as a one-off, officials recommend that any immigration responses to larger cohorts of people be provided for through an explicit and targeted policy. This approach also provides a clear frame for future consideration of individual decisions. This is also the approach taken previously for humanitarian responses such as the Christchurch response and the previous Afghan interpreters' group.

⁸ Existing examples of recent discretion decisions include granting visas to allow female judges and human rights activists from Afghanistan to enter New Zealand

64. Any bespoke arrangements would need to be carefully designed, considering priority of New Zealand's responsibility, the degree of people's connection to New Zealand, other priorities, and precedent risk. Any arrangement could involve establishing specific mechanisms or quotas for groups, and would include a number of challenges, including identification (eg if a specific group list is developed), and managing numbers and expectations from communities.
65. While additional bespoke arrangements could be developed, officials do not recommend this approach, as:
- a. the existing and potential pipeline is already large, and is already likely to impact on available services and accommodation
 - b. potential bespoke arrangements are likely to be unfair to other migrant communities not able to receive similar treatment
 - c. the arrangements may disadvantage higher need groups, such as UNHCR mandated refugees
 - d. uncertainty on the ability to exit Afghanistan and travel to New Zealand, with this expected to limit the practicality of options and potential benefits (which may result in dissatisfaction at Government's practical ability to deliver on any commitments), and
 - e. it creates a precedent risk for future humanitarian crises
66. Officials recommend a continuing focus on those New Zealand is already responsible for, with very limited approval by Ministers and delegated decision makers specific requests outside these grounds. This would not be expected to include extended family of people in New Zealand.

Potential options if you did wish to consider specific bespoke arrangements

67. If you did wish to consider bespoke arrangements, officials consider small and capped border exemptions / visa categories could be established for one or more of the following groups:
- a. Current Afghan applicants for the Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC) and/or and Parent Resident Visa Category (PRV) who are able to depart for New Zealand
 - b. Extended family of New Zealand citizens and residents in Afghanistan
 - c. New Zealand temporary visa holders in Afghanistan
68. Considerations for these groups are set out below.

Afghan applicants eligible for the Refugee Family Support Category and/ or Parents Resident Visa

69. This approach would use the existing RFSC and/ or the PRV processes to select family of eligible Afghans in New Zealand. This option would be more constrained than a full extended family option as outlined below (with the existing categories having more limited eligibility). This option could either be implemented by:
- a. Restarting the refugee family support category and/or parent category for Afghans only, or
 - b. Progressing existing Afghan applications currently lodged under either or both categories.
70. People in this process would have a family connection to New Zealand, and this approach would provide additional benefits for those already settled here (as eligibility requires reduced or no family links in New Zealand). However, either approach would create

discrimination risks by prioritising this group over nationalities with applications currently lodged or unable to apply and will likely lead to calls to restart these categories for other groups (or for other crisis regions).

Extended family of New Zealand citizens and residents in Afghanistan

71. This option would require Cabinet agreement to establish a bespoke border exemption and visa to allow entry to extended family of New Zealand citizens and residents currently in Afghanistan. While providing support for a range of people who already have family connections here, this approach would generate significant demand and expectations from the New Zealand Afghan community that may not be able to be met. Establishing relationships in the circumstances may also be challenging.
72. While a potential option to be considered, this approach may be seen to undermine the formal UNHCR refugee programme, allowing potentially lower priority individuals to enter New Zealand rather than higher-priority UNHCR refugees (including potential Afghan refugees). It may also generate demands for similar provisions for other migrant groups, and set a future precedent risk.

New Zealand temporary visa holders in Afghanistan (not part of initial response)

73. This group consists of people granted visas through standard processes (eg student, work visas) rather than through the initial response (eg those who supported agencies). This option also differs from the previous two groups, in that it would not require a specific bespoke immigration arrangement, but would continue the border exception previously established as a short-term response which enabled a range of temporary visa holders to depart for New Zealand on the Government-arranged response flights. This border exception would remain limited to those who were in Afghanistan and held visas on 18 August 2021 so processing would not resume for any applications in the system.
74. New Zealand has a lesser responsibility to such temporary visa holders compared to other groups, and we recommend that this exception should be closed to reflect its original purpose. However, it would be an option for this to remain in place to allow any current holders to have the opportunity to enter New Zealand. It is unclear at this stage how many people this may impact, and it would create an inconsistency with treatment of other nationals, in that it removes border restrictions for temporary visa holders from Afghanistan (which remain in place for other temporary visa holders offshore).

Other groups not recommended for bespoke arrangements

75. Several further groups have been identified but are not recommended for consideration of potential bespoke arrangements. These are:
 - a. people who provided support to New Zealand agencies but did not apply by the cut-off date
 - b. those not able to currently meet a partnership test
 - c. people of humanitarian concern in Afghanistan
 - d. temporary visa holders in New Zealand
 - e. Afghan nationals not in Afghanistan
76. These are discussed further below.

People who provided support to New Zealand agencies but did not apply by the cut-off date

77. As outlined, Cabinet agreed to allow Afghan nationals who supported NZ Inc, with requests for inclusion in this group closing at 23:59 on 25 August 2021 [CAB-21-MIN-0323 and CMG-21-MIN-001 refer]. We are aware of a number of applications were made after this date, some which may include otherwise eligible applications with genuine reasons for not being able to meet this deadline. Applications were closed as the numbers received and being approved were higher than Ministers' had anticipated.
78. While officials do not recommend reopening a similar process⁹, it may be possible to develop a more targeted pathway for eligible persons. However, as with the previous process, a key challenge would be the threshold for support, and assessing the direct risk of harm for applicants. It would also be possible for individuals with a genuine exit opportunity to seek individual consideration of their case using existing Ministerial discretion powers.

Those not able to currently meet criteria for a partnership visa

79. Officials are aware of a number of cases where Afghan applicants for a partnership visa have not been able to meet the living together criteria, reflecting the known challenges around cultural norms and culturally-arranged marriages (especially in the COVID-19 environment). It may be possible to establish a bespoke arrangement to allow entry for partners for in such situations.
80. This would potentially result in a large number of requests, and generate significant demands for other groups unable to secure partnership visas. It may be difficult to justify doing this for a particular group of nationals, and there are also significant immigration risks associated with a loosening of immigration partnership requirements. Establishing that partnerships are genuine (even if relaxing some requirements) would be challenging. For these reasons, this approach is not recommended.

Temporary visa holders in New Zealand

81. As outlined previously, there are currently 446 Afghan passport holders on a temporary visa currently in New Zealand, and consideration could be given to a bespoke option to allow these people to seek to remain in New Zealand.
82. A permanent bespoke option in such circumstances has not previously been implemented and creating one for Afghans will create a significant precedent risk. As with any visa holder, individuals who fear returning to their country may seek asylum, and this option is available for individual Afghans in New Zealand. A bespoke arrangement for temporary visa holders is therefore not recommended.¹⁰

People of humanitarian concern in Afghanistan

83. There are a number of cases of Afghan nationals seeking visas on humanitarian grounds that are being brought to Government attention through New Zealand-based advocates.
84. While it would be possible to offer a bespoke programme for these, there are higher priority groups for any bespoke arrangements, and such cases can be considered by the Minister of Immigration as per existing processes (and the Associate Minister on current delegations).

⁹ MFAT states it received a large volume of applications via this process, with around 9,000 ineligible applications

¹⁰ Volumes of potential future asylum claims from the Afghans currently in New Zealand are difficult to predict. While not a recommended approach, there is a potential risk that such claims may place a burden on the processing and consideration of claims.

Afghans in a third country (not Afghanistan or New Zealand)

85. We expect that there may be direct requests from Afghans in third countries to seek entry to New Zealand. We recommend that such requests be considered through standard processes, including registering with UNHCR or host countries as refugees, as there is no clear humanitarian requirement for such bespoke arrangements.

Next steps

86. If you wish to consider progressing specific options for immigration responses we recommend that you forward this paper to Power to Act Ministers for their information. Officials will then develop further options and advice, including bringing forward decisions on the RQP by late October (subject to the receipt of necessary UNHCR advice for this decision).

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – decisions for Cabinet paper

Date:	1 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1215

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Agree to the scope of the Afghanistan Cabinet paper and operational and funding decisions to be sought Indicate which options you wish to recommend to Cabinet on matters such as further resettlement cohorts	4 October 2021
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs		

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Andrew Craig	Manager, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 901 1245	s9(2)(a)	✓
Simon Barrett	Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)		s9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – decisions for Cabinet paper

Date:	1 October 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1215

Purpose

This briefing seeks your confirmation of the scope of issues and key decisions to be sought in a Cabinet paper on the Afghanistan humanitarian and resettlement response covering:

- The end-to-end requirements for agreed individuals to travel to, and be settled in New Zealand (including support out of Afghanistan, COVID-19 travel restrictions, MIQ priority, temporary accommodation, residence status, and resettlement support).
- Additional humanitarian options for Afghan nationals who are outside of the current scope of New Zealand Government resettlement offer.

This paper is being prepared as a joint paper for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Immigration to take to the Cabinet Economic Development Committee on 20 October (or another committee of your preference). The Minister of Immigration indicated he wished to discuss and confirm Ministerial 'preferred options' in the paper with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This briefing and the attached early draft Cabinet paper is intended to facilitate this discussion and feedback to officials to inform the development of the paper.

Key choices for cabinet paper

MBIE and MFAT are preparing a Cabinet paper for you to take to Cabinet Committee on 20 October. It is proposed to cover an update on the situation in Afghanistan and New Zealand's resettlement and other humanitarian efforts, and seek a series of policy and operational decisions on the ongoing support for those New Zealand has made commitments to, and any new support offers to other Afghans in need.

A very early draft of this cabinet paper is attached. This currently covers a lot of information and analysis on a number of issues where advice is still being developed. The paper will be heavily edited to focus on the key issues and New Zealand position, based on your feedback on scope, decisions and your "recommended options".

The general framing of the paper, and context for decisions on any further action, is that:

- New Zealand has already made a significant (and internationally comparable) commitment to support Afghans nationals to resettle in New Zealand. As of 24 September, 400 people have been assisted to travel to and settle in New Zealand, and an estimated 1200 further people have been granted visas or are New Zealand citizens and are eligible to travel to and enter New Zealand, almost all of whom are Afghan nationals. Of this group 900 are entitled for assistance from the New Zealand Government to travel. This nearly doubles New Zealand's annual refugee Quota of 1500.
- There remains significant uncertainty about how the situation in Afghanistan will develop and the ability to travel to New Zealand for the remaining 900+ people we have made commitments to help.
- The ongoing settlement and support efforts in New Zealand are comprehensive, extensive and resource intensive across agencies, and temporary and permanent housing is already a challenge. Any further offers of resettlement should be aligned with the capacity New

Zealand has to ensure successful settlement, including trade-offs with the needs of vulnerable New Zealanders.

The proposed paper outlines the general situation and other international responses, then covers three general areas where decisions are needed, or confirmation of current approaches.

1. *Facilitating resettlement from Afghanistan:*

- The paper notes the existing agreement to offer equivalent consular and other assistance to support travel to New Zealand to approved Afghan nationals as would be provided to New Zealand citizens in these unique circumstances (e.g. case management support and financial assistance for airfares). If circumstances in Afghanistan change such as increased flows across the borders, or the opening of the airport and ability to travel, more active facilitation could be considered to move larger groups (such as charter flight options) with a corresponding impact on MIQ and settlement services. The paper reflects MFAT's view that the outlook is too uncertain to seek any informed decisions on additional facilitation approaches at this time, noting that further advice could be provided if the situation changes.
- Decisions will be sought from the Director General of Health on exemptions for eligible Afghans to travel from high risk COVID-19 countries such as Pakistan.
- Decisions will be noted on priority for entry into MIQ. The Minister for COVID-19 Response has decided that this group should be managed through the emergency allocation, which will be increased by 50 per month. This should be sufficient for a moderate flow of arrivals, but options may need to be considered if it becomes possible for larger groups to arrive.
- Confirmation and funding will be sought for waiving MIQ fees for arrivals.

2. *Settlement support for current and future arrivals:*

- The paper will note the settlement efforts, and highlight the housing challenges.
- The paper seeks agreement to additional funding of \$XXX Million (amount to be confirmed) to cover temporary accommodation for the current arrivals in the Nesuto Hotel, and to secure arrangements for future arrivals from those already approved;
- The paper notes how *Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa* (the refugee resettlement centre in Mangere, Auckland) could be used to offset some of this pressure for current groups and the impacts on the Refugee programme
- The paper seeks agreement to additional funding to cover anticipated health, income support, children support and education costs for this group [advice is still being developed on access and normal funding sources]
- The paper will note the coverage of the special resident offer to evacuees, and that expansion could be considered if further resettlement groups are approved.

3. *Further immigration humanitarian response for other Afghans in need:*

- The paper will highlight the size of the additional resettlement offer New Zealand has already made to Afghan nationals with strong connections to New Zealand that, in MBIE and MFAT's view, is comparable to other international offers.
- The paper will seek agreement to increase the crisis event allocation within the Refugee Quota to 275 per annum from July 2022 and allocate 200 of these places to Afghan refugees. Other Afghan refugees can be selected through the regional allocations.
 - It is not possible to process additional refugees through the normal UNHCR process before this. This reflects ongoing discussions with the UNHCR about the relative priorities of Afghanistan to other groups in need. The Minister of Immigration is likely to meet with UNHCR representatives next week and will be able to further discuss their views.
- The paper can reflect the Ministers of Immigration and Foreign Affairs views that either:

- the resettlement offers to date and an ongoing assignment of places in the Refugee Quota is an appropriate response for New Zealand,
- OR
- that further resettlement offers to other Afghan groups in need should be pursued as border and settlement capacity permits.
- If Ministers wish to consider further groups, the paper should recommend these are not 'activated' until there is more certainty about if and when the current groups that have been offered resettlement may arrive, and that settlement capacity is available.
- The paper will seek agreement on any other specific groups Cabinet wants to consider for resettlement including:
 - Afghans with resident applications in categories like the Refugee Family Support and Parent categories;
 - People with a strong connection to New Zealand by supporting New Zealand efforts who were not identified or approved for resettlement in the initial evacuation phase;
 - Temporary visa holders in New Zealand;
 - Extended family in Afghanistan of New Zealanders;
 - Afghans in need in Afghanistan (such as women or children) [advice is still being developed on how a selection process could be operationalised].

Officials from MBIE and MFAT are available to discuss this scope and your preferred options with you further at the meeting on Monday 4 October.

The scope of the response and therefore the paper covers interests in a range of portfolios including COVID-19 Response and Social Development and Employment. You may wish to consider how their views are incorporated in your feedback ahead of finalisation of the paper and ministerial consultation.

Timeline for Cabinet paper

We are working to the consideration of the paper at DEV on 20 October 2021. This means the following timeline:

- 1 October - Early draft paper provided to Ministers
- 4 October - Feedback on scope of paper and preferred options
- 7 October - Completed paper provided and sent for Ministerial consultation
- 14 October - Lodgement of final paper
- 20 October - consideration at DEV
- 26 October - Cabinet confirmation

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Note** the attached early draft Cabinet paper *Noted*
- b **Agree** to seek decisions from Cabinet to the related operational issues outlined in the cabinet paper Agree / Disagree
- c **Agree** to reflect your preferred position on further resettlement groups as either:

1. That New Zealand has done our extra bit for those with a connection to New Zealand (nearly double the annual refugee quota) and will support that group and then use the normal refugee channels, or

Agree / Disagree

2. To offer further support to key groups from Afghanistan as capacity permits

Agree / Disagree

3. No preferred option

Agree / Disagree



Andrew Craig

**Manager, Immigration (Skills and Residence)
Policy**

Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

01/10/2021

Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Immigration

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) and section 6(a) of the Official Information Act 1982

DRAFT
RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation

Date:	8 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1303

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Forward the draft Cabinet paper to the relevant Ministers for consultation.	13 October 2021
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs	Note the changes made since the last draft we provided. Direct officials to amend the paper if necessary.	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Andrew Craig	Manager, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 901 1245	§ 9(2)(a)	✓
Simon Barrett	Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)		§ 9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Treasury, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, National Emergency Management Agency, and Kainga Ora.

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation

Date:	8 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1303

Purpose

To provide you with a draft Cabinet paper for consultation with your Ministerial colleagues.

- 1 This paper seeks Cabinet agreement to the ongoing New Zealand Government response to the situation in Afghanistan, and specific decisions to:
 - 1.1 amend the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Managed Isolation and Quarantine Charges) Regulations 2020 to include a Ministerial class waiver power for groups of people included in the Afghanistan resettlement response
 - 1.2 fund a package of services to provide the comprehensive and necessary wraparound support to Afghan evacuees, in addition to prospective travel costs to bring evacuees to New Zealand
 - 1.3 make Afghan evacuees eligible for Special Needs Re-establishment Grants under the Social Security Act 2018, including upon being granted permanent residency under the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Resident Visa Category
 - 1.4 allocate 200 places per annum (rising to 300 per annum) specifically to Afghan refugees in setting the next three-year Refugee Quota Programme
 - 1.5 direct officials to undertake further work on options to extend New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan (i.e. facilitate more Afghans being resettled here), that could be activated when existing resettlement commitments have been met and settlement capacity permits.

We amended the paper...

...in line with your feedback

1. We provided you with an early draft on 1 October and met with you to discuss on 4 October. You acknowledged New Zealand's comprehensive response for those with a connection to New Zealand but signalled you wanted to consider options to support key groups from Afghanistan as capacity permits.
2. The paper contains additional analysis of a suite of options for accommodating additional humanitarian groups and a recommendation that Cabinet invite you to report back with further analysis on any options that Cabinet wishes to receive advice on. You were particularly interested in options to support the settlement of women's rights and social justice advocates still in Afghanistan. s 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We will be looking at the mechanisms other countries put in place for these groups, if any.

...to reflect decisions that have been made

3. Since we provided the early version of the paper, the Minister for COVID-19 Response has agreed that all evacuees can be given MIQ spaces from the Emergency Allocation (EA).

Given the uncertainty around if and when Afghan evacuees will arrive in New Zealand, this option allows flexibility in MIQ settings while minimising wasted rooms if fewer evacuees than predicted arrive. The paper now reflects this.

...to reflect the funding needed to support Afghan evacuees

4. Over the last week, agencies have worked with Treasury to refine the quantum and nature of the funding sought to support the Afghan evacuees.
5. A total quantum of approximately \$36.795 million is sought to provide a range of services. Given the uncertainty around the total number of Afghan evacuees that will arrive, officials seek to appropriate around \$19.282 million now and establish an option to access the balance in the future.

The Minister for COVID-19 Response will confirm some content

6. At the time of writing, officials await the agreement of the Minister for Minister for COVID-19 Response regarding the content relating to Ministerial class waiver power for MIQ fees for Afghan evacuees (paragraphs 57 – 65). Officials have asked this Minister to agree to amend the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Managed Isolation and Quarantine Charges) Regulations 2020 to create a Ministerial class waiver power for people who are part of the Afghanistan resettlement response.

Officials will refine some content during Ministerial consultation

7. This paper has been prepared by officials across many portfolios and many agencies at great haste. Some relatively minor refinements are likely to be needed in the next few days. This may include refinements to the costings and technical refinements to the recommendations.

The paper needs to be finalised for lodgement on 14 October at 10am

8. We are working to the paper being considered at DEV on 20 October 2021. This means the following timeline:

Friday 8 October	Draft provided for Ministerial consultation
Thursday 14 October, 10am	Lodgement of final paper
Wednesday 20 October	Consideration at Cabinet Economic Development Committee (DEV)
Tuesday 26 October	Cabinet confirmation

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Forward** the draft Cabinet paper to key Ministerial colleagues including the Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Development, Minister for/of COVID-19 Response/Education, and Minister for Children.
Agree / Disagree

- b **Note** the changes made since the early draft you saw.
Noted

- c **Direct** officials to make any changes you seek prior to lodgement.
Agree / Disagree



Andrew Craig
**Manager, Immigration (Skills and Residence)
Policy**
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

8 October 2021

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – revised Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation

Date:	15 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1077

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Note the changes made since the last draft we provided.	20 October 2021
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs	Forward the draft Cabinet paper to your Ministerial colleagues Direct officials to make any changes you seek.	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Andrew Craig	Manager, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 901 1245	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Simon Barrett	Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)		s 9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Treasury, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, National Emergency Management Agency, and Kainga Ora.

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – final Cabinet paper for lodgement and talking points

Date:	15 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1077

Purpose

To provide you with a revised draft Cabinet paper, *Resettling Afghan evacuees: settlement support, COVID-19, and considering options to extend our response*, for you to forward to other Ministers for consultation.

This paper seeks Cabinet agreement to the ongoing New Zealand Government response to the situation in Afghanistan, and specific decisions to:

- amend the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Managed Isolation and Quarantine Charges) Regulations 2020 to include a Ministerial class waiver power for groups of people included in the Afghanistan resettlement response;
- immediately fund a package of services to provide the comprehensive and necessary wrap-around support to Afghan evacuees, in addition to setting a cap up to which joint Ministers could approve additional funding for costs under the Foreign Affairs and Immigration portfolios;
- Afghan evacuees being eligible for Special Needs Re-establishment Grants under the Social Security Act 2018, including upon being granted permanent residence under the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Resident Visa Category;
- Allocate 200 places per annum (rising to 300 per annum) specifically to Afghan refugees in setting the next three-year Refugee Quota Programme; and
- direct officials to undertake further work on options to extend New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan (i.e. facilitate more Afghans being resettled here), that could be activated when existing resettlement commitments have been met and settlement capacity permits.

We amended the paper...

...in line with your feedback

1. We provided you with an early draft on 1 October and met with you to discuss on 4 October. A revised draft was provided on 8 October.
2. We have amended the paper as per your direction to add information to show how New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan compares with our historical approach to resettling refugees.
3. We have also redrafted Part 2 of the Cabinet paper on options for extending New Zealand's response to seek a decision now on whether to activate further capped resettlement groups now, rather than waiting to see how settlement capacity copes with the upcoming arrivals from the 1200 visa holders offshore. MBIE advice remains not to activate further groups, and we have strengthened the challenges of finding physical accommodation as a major constraint. Ministers are given the option of:

- a. EITHER agreeing that the existing commitment, plus the specific refugee places for Afghan nationals in the Quota is enough;
- OR
- b. Agreeing, in addition to the groups in a, to activate a capped, 50-150 places, quota for either:
 - i. Afghans with existing family residence applications lodged (such as under the refugee family support category); or
 - ii. Extended family of resettled Afghan Interpreters (after the Minister of Immigration's discussion with this group); or
 - iii. Gender and human rights advocates and others at risk still in Afghanistan who are referred to New Zealand by recognised international bodies.
4. We have also in response to questions about CORS and other community capacity expanded the paragraph on CORS reiterating that it can be presented as an opportunity to focus on Afghan refugees and test community housing and other support capacity.

...to reflect changing circumstances

5. Since we provided the last version to you, the Minister for COVID-19 Response has agreed that all evacuees can be given MIQ spaces from the Emergency Allocation (EA).
6. However, MIQ is under sustained pressure due to the community outbreak, which has led to the conversion of managed isolation facilities into quarantine facilities and used up the MIQ operational reserve of rooms to relocate returnees. There is a significant risk that in the coming weeks there will be no MIQ rooms available to accommodate the number of Afghan evacuees seeking to enter the country.
7. As you are aware, the timing of future arrivals of Afghan evacuees is uncertain. Officials are monitoring the situation. It is likely that the content of this section of the Cabinet paper will change again in the final version lodged for DEV.
8. s 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] In its place, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) will lead the provision of resettlement support services for the Afghan arrivals. Hence the funding sought by MSD has decreased by \$1.132 million and the funding sought by INZ has increased by \$2.3 million.

...to refine the costings and narrative

9. Over the last week, agencies have worked with Treasury to refine the quantum and nature of the funding sought to support the Afghan evacuees, particularly in light of the change in provider for resettlement support services set out in the previous paragraph. The paper now seeks Cabinet agreement to make:
 - a. \$16.729 million available immediately; and
 - b. up to \$21.723 million available in the future, subject to the approval of joint Ministers.
10. We have also streamlined the contextual information at the front of the paper.

The paper needs to be finalised for lodgement on 21 October at 10am

11. We are working to the paper being considered at DEV on 27 October 2021. This means the following timeline:

Thursday 21 October, 10am	Due date for lodgement of the final paper
Wednesday 27 October	Consideration at Cabinet Economic Development Committee (DEV)
Monday 1 November	Cabinet confirmation

Annex

Annex 1 – Final Cabinet paper for lodgement

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the changes made since the last draft you saw (provided on 8 October).

Noted

b **Forward** the Cabinet paper to the other Ministers you wish to consult.

Agree / Disagree

Out of Scope

d **Direct** officials to make any changes you seek before lodgement.

Agree / Disagree



Andrew Craig
**Manager, Immigration (Skills and Residence)
Policy**

Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

15 October 2021

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) and section 6(a)
of the Official Information Act 1982

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982



BRIEFING

Final Cabinet paper for lodging – Afghan evacuees

Date:	28 October 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1429

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Note the changes made since the last draft we provided.	As soon as possible
Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs	Agree to lodge the final version of the Cabinet paper as soon as possible for consideration at CBC on 1 November.	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Andrew Craig	Manager, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)	04 901 1245	s 9(2)(a)	✓
Simon Barrett	Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy (Skills and Residence)		s 9(2)(a)	

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Treasury, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, National Emergency Management Agency, and Kainga Ora.

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Afghanistan response – final Cabinet paper for lodgement and talking points

Date:	28 October 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	2122-1429

Purpose

To provide you with a final Cabinet paper, *Resettling Afghan evacuees: settlement support, COVID-19, and considering options to extend our response*, for lodging as soon as possible for consideration at Cabinet Business Committee (CBC) on 1 November.

We amended the paper...

...in line with feedback from Ministers

1. We have provided several drafts to you throughout October so you could consult with your Ministerial colleagues.
2. We have amended the last draft in accordance with comments from Ministers, i.e. we have:
 - a. Added a clear explanation of the numbers of people we are obliged to help near the beginning, along with information on visa categories
 - b. Better outlined the supports given by MFAT to people who may end up in Pakistan and other third countries, as well as outlining the supports we are trying to give to people with visas who are in Afghanistan
 - c. Shortened the paper.

...to refine the costings

3. Over the last week, agencies have worked with Treasury to refine the quantum and nature of the funding sought to support the Afghan evacuees.
4. The paper now seeks Cabinet agreement to make:
 - a. \$16.729 million available immediately; and
 - b. up to \$22.784 million available in the future, subject to the joint approval of the relevant portfolio Minister and the Minister of Finance.

The paper needs to be lodged as soon as possible

5. We are working to the paper being considered at CBC on 1 November 2021. Normally the paper would need to be lodged by 10am the Thursday before (in this case, 28 October). As this deadline has passed, the paper will need to be lodged through the late lodgement process. Your office can organise this. If CBC considers the paper on 1 November the CBC Minute will be confirmed by Cabinet on 8 November.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Final Cabinet paper for lodgement

Annex 2 – Talking points

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Note** the changes made since the last draft you saw.

Noted

b **Agree** to lodge this Cabinet paper for consideration at the Cabinet Business Committee (CBC) on 1 November.

Agree / Disagree

c **Note** that this requires your office to submit a late lodgement form.

Noted



Andrew Craig
**Manager, Immigration (Skills and Residence)
Policy**
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE

28 October 2021

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Annex 1 – Final Cabinet Paper

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

§ 18(d)

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Annex 2 – Talking points

General

- New Zealand's response to the situation in Afghanistan is comprehensive, extensive, resource intensive, internationally credible, and comparable to like-minded nations.
- Officials are working across a range of agencies and portfolios to support the evacuees.
- In total, up to 1,600 evacuees could arrive. As 19 October, 449 people have arrived already but others face difficulties travelling to New Zealand.

We seek Cabinet agreement to funding for services

- Funding is needed to provide services to support these people.
- Given the uncertainty around the timing of arrivals, we seek agreement to (i) immediate funding to support those that are here and are likely to arrive in the near term, and (ii) funding subject to approval by joint Ministers to support future arrivals, if necessary.
- We seek \$16.729 million immediately to fund:
 - Costs in the Immigration portfolio, primarily extended temporary accommodation for those that have arrived or are expected to arrive soon
 - Oranga Tamariki to provide social work services, meet the cost of children coming in to care, and cover social service support for 12-14 Afghan evacuee families for a year
 - the Ministry of Social Development to provide a one off Re-establishment grant to help the individuals to resettle in New Zealand
 - Provide additional funding to support increased demand on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision within the tertiary sector and learning support within schooling for Afghan evacuees.
- We seek up to \$19.584 million of funding to support costs incurred by the Immigration portfolio, with approval delegated to the Ministers of Finance and Immigration.
- The paper seeks policy decisions in accordance with these funding decisions.

COVID-19, MIQ and evacuees

- Officials will undertake a public health assessment to inform consideration by the Director-General of Health of a potential class exemption to the COVID-19 'very high risk country' policy for eligible Afghan nationals.
- Cabinet already agreed that people seeking to travel to New Zealand as part of our Refugee Quota Programme are exempted from the requirement to be fully vaccinated before travelling.
- For the avoidance of doubt, agreement that the exemption for refugees is intended to cover any eligible Afghan nationals and family members travelling to New Zealand under the current New Zealand Government response was confirmed by the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group on 28 October.
- The Minister for COVID-19 Response has agreed to grant MIQ Emergency Allocation spaces to evacuees. Officials will provide further advice if a large number of evacuees seek to enter New Zealand at the same time, meaning sufficient MIQ spaces are not available.
- The Minister for COVID-19 Response seeks agreement to amend the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Managed Isolation and Quarantine Charges) Regulations 2020 to include a Ministerial class waiver power for groups of people included in the Afghanistan resettlement response.

Options for extending New Zealand's response

- We seek agreement to allocate the following places to Afghan refugees in the next three-

year RQP cycle:

- 200 places in 2022/23;
- 250 places in 2023/24; and
- 300 places in 2024/25.
- It is important to note that that the refugee quota also includes:
 - 200 places for large-scale crisis situations; and
 - at least 150 places for women at risk.
- These places may be allocated to Afghan refugees and other existing crises, as well as other situations that emerge throughout this period.
- I will come back with decisions on other categories and sub-categories within the quota by March 2022.

s 9(2)(g)(i)

- If we want to expand our offering, we could direct officials to develop one of these options:
 - Expanding the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship programme, dependent on indications of community housing capacity
 - Providing an additional an additional capped, balloted resettlement pathway for either:
 - Extended family of Afghans living in New Zealand; or
 - The extended family of Afghan interpreters resettled in New Zealand; or
 - Human and Gender rights advocates at risk in Afghanistan identified by international or representative bodies.
- These options require further decisions on design and funding.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Costs for Cabinet paper

Temporary accommodation

Accom. Security, catering (400)	\$ 4,446,840.00
Accom (1200)	\$ 10,540,000.00
Catering	\$ 1,396,800.00
Security	\$ 2,080,000.00
Staffing	\$ 3,201,600.00
Legal	\$ 30,000.00
Contingency	\$ 1,500,000.00
	\$ 23,195,240.00

Staffing to find houses and pre-rent

Staffing	\$ 1,536,000.00
Pre-rent	\$ 180,000.00
	\$ 1,716,000.00

Settlement support, travel, furniture

Settlement	\$ 2,300,000.00
Domestic travel	\$ 124,500.00
Furniture (400)	\$ 405,900.00
Furniture (1200)	\$ 1,230,000.00
	\$ 4,060,400.00

Visa processing

Residence	\$ 481,500.00
PRV	\$ 8,400.00
Critical purpose	\$ 123,000.00
	\$ 612,900.00

Total
\$ 29,584,540.00

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982