



File No. DOIA 2223-0377

22 September 2022

Pariket Dhabuwala
fyi-request-20346-3e985b92@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Pariket

Thank you for your email of 25 August 2022 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

New Zealand borders were opened to the world from 31st July 2022.

In light of this, may I know

A) If any additional staff were recruited to handle phone calls and process applications on or before 31st July 2022? If so, how many?

B) How many staff did immigration New Zealand assign to handle phone calls in August 2019, August 2021 and August 2022 respectively?

Immigration Contact Centre had begun the process of planning and recruiting for the expected workload following the Reconnecting of New Zealand in September 2021. We have been in continuous recruitment drive since January 2022, and have recruited 61 permanent, full-time Client Services Advisors (CSAs) to date. We have another 11 CSAs in the process of being onboarded at the time of writing, and our recruitment will continue for the foreseeable future.

We are hoping to reach the resourcing levels of the pre-Covid period, however the current employment market is proving challenging for most industries to find suitable candidates, so it has been a slower process than usual. Our recruitment advisors have opened up all available recruitment pipelines to achieve our goals, so besides permanent recruitment, we are also offering temporary contracts and part-time hours, to corner as much of the market as possible.

While we continue to recruit, the strength of the current employment market has also opened up numerous opportunities for career growth and promotions, which has had an impact on our resources as well – many of our experienced people have moved on to other roles within and outside of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in the last two years, so while we have recruited 60+ people, we also continue to see our people move on to other roles.

All of these factors give greater context to our resourcing numbers, for handling phone calls, that you have requested, as listed below. Please note FTE refers to Full Time Employee:

Month	FTE
August 2019	190.4

Te Whakatairanga Service Delivery

August 2020	173.8
August 2021	146.9
August 2022	155.3

In preparation for the border re-opening, Immigration New Zealand began recruitment of additional visa processing staff beginning at the end of 2021 and continuing throughout 2022. The key focus was ensuring Immigration New Zealand are recruiting regularly to get ahead of attrition and have staff trained in the right areas to support reconnecting New Zealand to the world.

198 immigration officers were recruited between 1 January and 31 July 2022 of which 64 have solely been for replacing attrition, leading to a growth of 134 immigration officers.

I trust this has answered your request in full.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. The relevant details can be found at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely



Nelowfar Ghumkhor
National Manager, Immigration Service Centre
Engagement and Experience