



11 January 2023

Grant Johnson

fyi-request-21388-dcf98f68@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2223-1270

Dear Grant,

Thank you for your email of 11 December 2022 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

'In an 21 October 2022 article on RNZ by Gill Bonnett

(<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rnz.co.nz%2Fnews%2Fnational%2F477098%2Fresidence-visas-national-security-check-waits-loom-large-for-chinese-applicants&data=05%7C01%7CMinisterialServices%40mbie.govt.nz%7C66331f85f013425d939808dadae2538e%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C638062962869458336%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IkhWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&odata=Bqo%2BNA3jJNWG%2F1ktdEqjHeF687upXYFx0ns9ibq6c%3D&reserved=0>), NZSIS supplied information regarding the average response times for a National Security Check (NSC) for applicants for residency visas.

The article includes the following quote:

"[NZSIS's] data showed its average response time for a NSC check was 23 days. Citizenship requests were responded to on average after two days, while 'priority' residence visas took 38. Residence 2021 category took 46, while 'routine residence visas including Residence 2021' took 66."

In a separate OIA request to NZSIS

(<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffyi.org.nz%2Frequest%2F21056-criteria-for-priority-residence-nsc-checks&data=05%7C01%7CMinisterialServices%40mbie.govt.nz%7C66331f85f013425d939808dadae2538e%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C638062962869458336%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IkhWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&odata=LKPAveuNDbMJKfMtrB%2FHvt%2BUX74D4RrhJOQzKW4dM8Q%3D&reserved=0>), NZSIS said that the determination of "priority" requests was set by Immigration NZ, not by NZSIS.

With that in mind, can you please clarify which NSC requests obtain "priority" status from Immigration NZ? Is there a set of criteria used in determining which residence visa applications qualify as "priority" for the purposes of a NSC check? If so, what are those criteria? Or are there certain residency visa categories that receive a blanket designation as "priority", and if so, what are those categories?'

Our response

The time it takes to complete an NSC varies depending on the applicant and their circumstances. However, there are exceptional situations where INZ identifies the need to process cases with some urgency. Prioritisation is requested on a case-by-case basis and not according to set criteria.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the Ministry's response to your request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact INZOIAs@mbie.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Clifford', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Clifford
General Manager, Border and Visa Operations (Acting)
Immigration New Zealand