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John

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Tēnā koe John

OIA request 23/24 0634 Request for citizenship timeframes/processing

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 21 February 2024.

You requested –

- 1. What measures have the DIA implemented to reduce the citizenship application backlog?*
- 2. How effective of these measures in reducing the backlog?*
- 3. Is there any timeframe that DIA estimates the backlog can be cleaned and return to normal timeframe of citizenship application? and how is the progress?*
- 4. Any further planned measures to further reduce the backlog and what is the timeline of the planned measures implementation, and the expected results and effectiveness of the planned measures?*

On the same day you submitted additional questions –

- 5. after an online application has been submitted, when the automated check will be initiated?*
- 6. If the application passes all automated checks, when will it be moved to the appropriate workstream?*

In response to your combined requests which have been numbered for ease of reference, I can provide you with the following information.

Questions one and four

The Department regularly reviews and updates published citizenship application information based on feedback and commonly asked questions. I can advise that this information will soon be publicly available at the following website: <https://www.govt.nz/browse/passports-citizenship-and-identity/nz-citizenship/how-to-apply-for-nz-citizenship/application-timeframes/>

As such, I must refuse this portion of your request pursuant to section 18(d) of the Act: that the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Questions two and three

It is important to explain there is no obligation on an agency to form an opinion to answer a request, however, the following dataset is regularly updated and will provide you relevant information regarding measures: <https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/status-of-citizenship-by-grant-applications-by-date-received-at-dia>

It is also important to explain there is no set standard processing timeframe for citizenship applications because every application is different. For that reason, there is no 'normal' timeframe.

Questions five and six

Automated checks initiates as soon as the application is submitted. On completion of the automated checks, the application is automatically assigned to the appropriate workstream.

It might be helpful to also explain that the Department continually introduces and improves automated checks to the processing system. When an automated check is newly introduced or improved, the check is applied to all applications in the processing system. This is done regardless of when the application was received or the workstream it is in.

You may be interested to know that there is a lot of publicly available information online about citizenship and the timeframes for processing citizenship applications. The Department, for example, regularly proactively publishes Official Information Act responses on its website, including information about citizenship timeframes. Responses have been proactively released here <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>. You can use the search criteria 'citizenship' to find the relevant responses.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Department has decided to proactively release a copy of this response on the DIA website. All requestor data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



Julia Taylor
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Service Delivery and Operations