



25 May 2021

Anatoliy Goryachev

By email: fyi-request-15006-e9d099f0@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021-1915

Dear Anatoliy Goryachev

Thank you for your email of 27 March 2021, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- 1) Please provide number of priority / non-priority (separately) SMC/RFW applications that were lodged and currently waiting for case officer allocation for each month from August 2019 to April 2021;*
- 2) Please provide the number of applications that were lodged and are still unallocated in the priority / non-priority (separately) SMC/RFW queue for every single day between 01 August 2019 and 31 December 2019 (including 01 August 2021 and 31 December if any);*
- 3) Could you please share the numbers on how many residence applications were allocated to case officers (separately for priority and non-priority queue) for each of the weeks commencing on 01 March 2021, 08 March 2021, 15 March 2021, 22 March 2021, 29 March 2021, 05 April 2021, 12 April 2021, 19 April 2021, 26 April 2021, etc...;*
- 4) Which lodgment date (non-priority, SMC/RFW queue) is INZ allocating at the time of the reply? Why INZ has changed its policy on sharing the non-priority queue updates? We used to get the latest allocation date from the MBIE INZ Senior Technical Advisor on a weekly basis - but now they refuse to share this information and instead refer us to OIA requests. OIA requests may take up to 28 working days - so we won't have access to the latest data and will be forced to lodge OIA requests on a weekly basis which will increase workload of MBIE business advisor. Could you please share any communication between MBIE INZ Senior Technical Advisor and/or INZ management on this issue.*
- 5) Please provide the latest lodgment date of the non-priority SMC/RFW application after weekly allocation completed (what is the latest lodgment date of application allocated to case officer) for each of the weeks commencing on 01 March 2021, 08 March 2021, 15 March 2021, 22 March 2021, 29 March 2021, 05 April 2021, 12 April 2021, 19 April 2021, 26 April 2021, etc...;*



Our response

1) Please provide number of priority / non-priority (separately) SMC/RFW applications that were lodged and currently waiting for case officer allocation for each month from August 2019 to April 2021;

Please refer to Table One and Table Two attached. We have withheld application counts of 5 or fewer under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Skilled residence queue data is not static due to the complex nature of visa processing operations. Applications move between queues and this needs to be taken into account when comparing data over time. The data changes over time for reasons such as but not limited to:

- Applicants arriving into New Zealand on critical purpose visas result in their applications moving from the offshore queue to one of the onshore queues;
- A change in an applicant's circumstances resulting in their application meeting the priority criteria and being moved to the priority queue;
- Applications being escalated via the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) process - <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>;

Most data used in OIA responses is pulled directly from the INZ Application Management System (AMS), and reflects the date that the data entry relating to the application was completed in AMS. On occasion an application is received by INZ on one date, but the data entry is not completed until a later date. In the interest of fairness, when allocating applications the Manukau office use the date that all information required for the acceptance of the application was actually received by INZ rather than the date the data entry was completed – which reflects when a client will perceive their application to have been submitted. This means that there may be differences noted in the allocation data, which is sourced directly from the Manukau office, when compared with other statistics about skilled residence, including number and dates of applications in the queues.

Any updates in regards to the allocation of applications can be found via the following link: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/how-long-it-takes-to-process-your-visa-application>

2) Please provide the number of applications that were lodged and are still unallocated in the priority / non-priority (separately) SMC/RFW queue for every single day between 01 August 2019 and 31 December 2019 (including 01 August 2021 and 31 December if any);

Please refer to Table Three attached. We have withheld application counts of 5 or fewer under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

3) Could you please share the numbers on how many residence applications were allocated to case officers (separately for priority and non-priority queue) for each of the weeks commencing on 01 March 2021, 08 March 2021, 15 March 2021, 22 March 2021, 29 March 2021, 05 April 2021, 12 April 2021, 19 April 2021, 26 April 2021, etc...;

Please refer to Table Four attached.

4) Which lodgment date (non-priority, SMC/RFW queue) is INZ allocating at the time of the reply? Why INZ has changed its policy on sharing the non-priority queue updates? We used to get the latest allocation date from the MBIE INZ Senior Technical Advisor on a weekly basis - but now they refuse to share this information and instead refer us to OIA requests. OIA requests may take up to 28 working days - so we won't have access to the latest data and will be forced to lodge OIA requests on a weekly basis which will increase workload of MBIE business advisor. Could you please share any communication between MBIE INZ Senior Technical Advisor and/or INZ management on this issue. As at 24 May 2021, the oldest application in the skilled residence onshore non-priority queue is 30 August 2019. This is the date that all information required for the acceptance of the application was actually received by INZ rather than the date the data entry was completed.

The other parts of this question were answered by Business Advisor, Anna McLachlan in an email to you dated 27 April 2021.

5) Please provide the latest lodgment date of the non-priority SMC/RFW application after weekly allocation completed (what is the latest lodgment date of application allocated to case officer) for each of the weeks commencing on 01 March 2021, 08 March 2021, 15 March 2021, 22 March 2021, 29 March 2021, 05 April 2021, 12 April 2021, 19 April 2021, 26 April 2021, etc...;

Please refer to Table Five attached.

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.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Anna McLachlan, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at Anna.McLachlan@mbie.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



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Nicola Hogg
General Manager
Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

Table One

The number of skilled residence (Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work) applications in the onshore non-priority queue that were accepted from 1 August 2019 to 30 April 2021 (inclusive) broken down by accepted month as at 4 May 2021.

Month accepted	Non-priority
August 2019	186
September 2019	577
October 2019	622
November 2019	718
December 2019	750
January 2020	568
February 2020	927
March 2020	938
May 2020	88
June 2020	1,539
July 2020	1,091
August 2020	198
September 2020	697
October 2020	386
November 2020	421
December 2020	260
January 2021	378
February 2021	184
March 2021	366
April 2021	520
Total	11,414

Table Two

The number of skilled residence (Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work) visa applications in the onshore priority queue that were accepted from 1 Aug 2019 to 30 April 2021 (inclusive) broken down by accepted month as at 17 May 2021.

Month accepted	Priority
August 2019	0
September 2019	<=5
October 2019	0
November 2019	<=5
December 2019	<=5
January 2020	0
February 2020	0

You will note there are some priority applications accepted several months ago. This is because as applicants' circumstances change, some non-priority applications may meet the prioritisation criteria (current occupational registration where registration is required by immigration instructions or an hourly rate at or above twice the median wage). Such applications are moved to the priority queue and allocated within two weeks.

March 2020	<=5
May 2020	0
June 2020	<=5
July 2020	0
August 2020	0
September 2020	0
October 2020	<=5
November 2020	0
December 2020	<=5
January 2021	0
February 2021	<=5
March 2021	0
April 2021	<=5
Total	12

Table Three

The number of skilled residence (Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work) visa applications in the onshore/offshore priority and non-priority queues that were accepted from 1 August 2019 to 31 December 2019 (inclusive) broken down by day date, as at 17 May 2021

Day accepted	Offshore Non Priority applications	Onshore Non Priority applications	Priority applications
1 August 2019	6	0	0
2 August 2019	<=5	0	0
6 August 2019	8	0	0
7 August 2019	<=5	0	0
8 August 2019	6	0	0
9 August 2019	<=5	0	0
10 August 2019	7	0	0
12 August 2019	<=5	0	0
13 August 2019	<=5	0	0
14 August 2019	<=5	0	0
15 August 2019	<=5	0	0
16 August 2019	6	0	0
19 August 2019	<=5	0	0
20 August 2019	<=5	0	0
21 August 2019	<=5	0	0
22 August 2019	<=5	0	0
23 August 2019	<=5	0	0
24 August 2019	<=5	<=5	0
26 August 2019	<=5	<=5	0
27 August 2019	<=5	<=5	0
28 August 2019	<=5	7	0
29 August 2019	<=5	<=5	0

30 August 2019	<=5	8	0
2 September 2019	<=5	15	0
3 September 2019	<=5	14	0
4 September 2019	8	13	0
5 September 2019	6	21	0
6 September 2019	<=5	24	0
7 September 2019	8	42	0
9 September 2019	<=5	22	0
10 September 2019	0	<=5	0
11 September 2019	<=5	24	0
12 September 2019	<=5	33	0
13 September 2019	<=5	0	0
16 September 2019	<=5	24	0
17 September 2019	<=5	36	0
18 September 2019	<=5	29	0
19 September 2019	<=5	16	0
20 September 2019	<=5	21	0
21 September 2019	<=5	41	0
23 September 2019	<=5	28	0
24 September 2019	<=5	20	<=5
25 September 2019	<=5	29	0
26 September 2019	<=5	36	<=5
27 September 2019	<=5	22	0
28 September 2019	<=5	25	0
30 September 2019	<=5	24	0
1 October 2019	<=5	29	0
2 October 2019	0	25	0
3 October 2019	<=5	21	0
4 October 2019	<=5	21	0
5 October 2019	0	33	0
7 October 2019	<=5	22	0
8 October 2019	7	22	0
9 October 2019	<=5	29	0
10 October 2019	6	35	0
11 October 2019	<=5	28	0
14 October 2019	<=5	26	0
15 October 2019	<=5	21	0
16 October 2019	<=5	27	0
17 October 2019	<=5	33	0
18 October 2019	<=5	<=5	0
19 October 2019	<=5	41	0
21 October 2019	<=5	19	0
22 October 2019	7	26	0
23 October 2019	<=5	11	0
24 October 2019	<=5	30	0
25 October 2019	<=5	17	0
29 October 2019	<=5	30	0

30 October 2019	<=5	42	0
31 October 2019	6	35	0
1 November 2019	6	24	0
4 November 2019	<=5	37	0
5 November 2019	6	28	0
6 November 2019	<=5	28	0
7 November 2019	<=5	34	0
8 November 2019	<=5	40	0
11 November 2019	7	38	<=5
12 November 2019	<=5	44	0
13 November 2019	6	32	0
14 November 2019	6	40	0
15 November 2019	<=5	39	0
18 November 2019	<=5	42	0
19 November 2019	<=5	33	0
20 November 2019	<=5	37	0
21 November 2019	7	37	0
22 November 2019	6	29	0
25 November 2019	<=5	27	0
26 November 2019	.	21	0
27 November 2019	<=5	37	0
28 November 2019	<=5	51	0
29 November 2019	<=5	22	0
2 December 2019	9	42	<=5
3 December 2019	<=5	56	0
4 December 2019	<=5	28	0
5 December 2019	<=5	49	0
6 December 2019	7	41	0
7 December 2019	<=5	44	0
9 December 2019	<=5	46	0
10 December 2019	<=5	40	0
11 December 2019	8	28	0
12 December 2019	<=5	37	0
13 December 2019	<=5	44	0
14 December 2019	<=5	46	0
16 December 2019	<=5	36	0
17 December 2019	<=5	36	0
18 December 2019	8	32	0
19 December 2019	<=5	37	0
20 December 2019	<=5	38	0
23 December 2019	<=5	31	0
24 December 2019	<=5	24	0
27 December 2019	0	<=5	0
30 December 2019	0	9	0
31 December 2019	0	<=5	0

Table Four

Allocation information relating to skilled residence (Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work) applications

Week commencing	Number of Priority skilled residence applications allocated	Number of Non-priority skilled residence applications allocated	Applications allocated via the employment visa escalation (EVE) process ¹
1 March 2021	35	30	1
8 March 2021	52	0	0
15 March 2021	73	49	0
22 March 2021	16	118	0
29 March 2021	26	80	2
5 April 2021	47	20	0
12 April 2021	37	31	1
19 April 2021	79	4	0
26 April 2021	45	39	3
3 May 2021	41	46	0

Table Five

Accepted dates of the last applications allocated from the non-priority skilled residence queue, broken down by week. You will note that the information is not available for every week. This is because the data is recorded manually. If the information is not captured at the time the allocations were being made, there is no way for us to capture it retrospectively.

Week commencing	Date of last application allocated from the non-priority queue
1 March 2021	26 July 2019
8 March 2021	Not recorded
15 March 2021	Not recorded
22 March 2021	29 July 2019
29 March 2021	1 August 2019
5 April 2021	Not recorded
12 April 2021	8 August 2019
19 April 2021	Not recorded
26 April 2021	19 August 2019
3 May 2021	Not recorded
10 May 2021	22 August 2019

¹ Employment Visa Escalation is a process to respond to escalation requests for urgent allocation for employment related visas (and associated family members) for both Temporary Work Visas and Skilled Resident Visas. For more information see the INZ website here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>