

Hon Iain Lees-Galloway

MP for Palmerston North

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety Deputy Leader of the House

Minister of Immigration

Minister for ACC



2 MAR 2020

MOIA 15

Tammy

fyi-request-12130-5f1c432d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Tammy,

Thank you for writing to me about the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and the New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) on 31 January 2020.

I note that you sent a similar query to Immigration New Zealand (INZ) which was responded to on 13 February 2020.

More and more people want to come to New Zealand with Jacinda Ardern as Prime Minister - we have low unemployment and a solid economy. A lot of people are attracted to New Zealand's culture and values.

That has meant, as you note, there are a lot of people in the queue to apply for residency. In this situation we need to ensure we are prioritising those people with the skills we need the most – that should be understandable.

Those in the priority queue include registered professionals like nurses, teachers and doctors, and some well paid professions. That said, Immigration New Zealand is now processing both the priority and non-priority queues, the non-priority queue was not being processed since 2018 and is now, so this is a step ahead for everyone.

You ask about the New Zealand Residency Policy - residency policy is an important one and should not be rushed. We're looking at what the best options are, and then discussing these with our coalition and confidence supply partners. The most important issues to consider are the policy goals – immigration needs to serve New Zealand's interests: that includes helping us build a sustainable, productive and inclusive economy and society while supporting our humanitarian responsibilities.

Previously, the NZRP would include a Planning Range, which set the upper and lower number for residence visa approvals. We have decided to replace the Planning Range with a more targeted approach that focuses on the management of specific residence visa types.

I expect to announce a decision on the NZRP in the first half of the year.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the ombudsman of my response to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

I hope you find this information helpful. Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iain Lees-Galloway', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Iain Lees-Galloway
Minister of Immigration