



24 August 2020

Dr. Renoh Chalakkal  
fyi-request-13431-bef65ae0@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021 – 0246

Dear Dr. Renoh Chalakkal

Thank you for your email on 31 July 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

- 1. It was replied to many previous OIA requests on SMS visa processing that many applications from the general queue are able to get CO assigned quickly, by jumping the queue who are given priority status by the MBIE through the Visa escalation process. I want to know if there are any official criteria or conditions available using which MBIE/Immigration NZ decides which all applications to be escalated to priority queue from the general queue. Or is it only depending on the person evaluating such requests? If so how it is expected to be a standardized process?*
- 2. If there are any such criteria laid out that is currently being used for the escalation, why the Immigration NZ is not making it public?*
- 3. What is/are the process/documents that one has to provide to the visa escalation team to consider the case?*
- 4. What is the email ID/contact number of the respective visa escalation team from MBIE/Immigration NZ?*

### **Our response**

In relation to question 1 of your request, Immigration Instructions A16.1 sets out the order of visa processing for both residence and temporary entry class visa applications.

For those applicants who have submitted a skilled residence application (Skilled Migrant Category or Residence from Work), priority is given to applicants in New Zealand and where the:

- Application includes a job offer with an hourly rate equivalent to or higher than twice the median wage (currently \$51.00 per hour or an annual salary of \$106,080 or more); or
- Application includes a job offer which requires occupational registration where occupational registration is required by immigration instructions.

The remaining applications are processed in the order they are received.

Information regarding this is publically available and can be found here:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/how-we-prioritise->

[resident-visa-applications](https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/how-we-prioritise-resident-visa-applications/smc-and-rfw-prioritisation-information-for-applicants), and here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/how-we-prioritise-resident-visa-applications/smc-and-rfw-prioritisation-information-for-applicants>. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) because the information requested is publically available.

Applications are processed in date order of lodgement. However, A16.1 (f) does allow the allocation of other applications when individual circumstances warrant this. This includes applications returned by the Immigration Protection Tribunal for re-assessment, applications requiring reassignment due to staff movement, and those escalated through the Employment Visa Escalation (EVE) process.

The information you have requested for questions 2 to 4 of your request is publically available and can found here: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/newsletters/korero/korero-july-2019/employment-visa-escalations-eve>. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) because the information requested is publically available.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Margaret Huang, Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at [Margaret.huang@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Margaret.huang@mbie.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Hogg'.

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