



23 SEP 2020

Abdulla Al Momen

By email: fyi-request-13653-01a94f03@requests.fyi.org.nz

File No: DOIA 2021-0498

Dear Abdulla Al Momen

Thank you for your email of 3 September 2020, requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

The number of applications that are currently held in the non-priority queue under the SMC, which lodgement dates are from 01/02/2019-15/05/2019 Onshore only.

Also, what is the number of applications that INZ is allocating each month to a CASE OFFICER for the onshore nonpriority applicant only.

Thank you for clarifying your request on 8 September 2020 to the following:

- The number of applications that are currently held in the non-priority skilled residence queue, with lodgement dates between 1st Feb 2019 to 15th May 2019 (inclusive) - onshore applications only.*
- The number of onshore, non-priority skilled residence applications INZ allocated to Immigration Officers in the months of July and August 2020.*

Our response

The number of applications that are currently held in the non-priority skilled residence queue, with lodgement dates between 1st Feb 2019 to 15th May 2019 (inclusive) - onshore applications only. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) does not have a specific Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) queue but one for skilled residence applications. These applications are SMC and Resident from Work (RFW) and are all processed in the Manukau office. The applications are not split into two separate queues based on the application category.

As at 15 September 2020 there were 965 onshore applications in the non-priority skilled residence queue, which were accepted from 1 February to 15 May 2019 (inclusive).

The number of onshore, non-priority skilled residence applications INZ allocated to Immigration Officers in the months of July and August 2020.

The below table outlines the number of skilled residence applications allocated in July and August 2020.

Date	Priority	Non Priority	Total
July 2020	491	110	601
August 2020	622	353	975

Note: "Priority" are applications that currently in the priority queue. They are from onshore applicants who have high income or hold occupational registration. "Non Priority" are all other onshore applications that do not meet the current priority criteria. Immigration Instructions A16.1 (<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/#44854.htm>) sets out the order of visa processing for both residence and temporary entry class visa applications.

Allocations of applications to immigration officers occur weekly and the number of applications that are allocated is dependent upon processing capacity.

Visa processing for overseas applicants is still on hold. This is because people who are not New Zealand citizens or residents are unlikely to meet the current entry requirements. INZ is not able to legally grant a visa to people who are unlikely to meet the entry requirements. As such, offshore applications have been separated and tagged non-priority. Processing for offshore applications will resume when the border re-opens.

The New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) Planning Range sets the upper and lower number for residence visa approvals. The previous Planning Range was 50,000 to 60,000 residence approvals from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019. The Government is currently reviewing its approach to the NZRP and is considering replacing the planning range with a more targeted approach that focuses on management of specific residence visa types. In the meantime, INZ will continue to process applications at same volume and with the same level of resourcing as the previous NZRP allowed for, this does have an impact on the number of applications that can be allocated and the timeliness of application processing.

Any updates in regards to the allocation of applications can be found at the following link: www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/how-we-prioritise-resident-visa-applications/smc-and-rfw-timeframe-information.

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



Steve McGill
Acting General Manager
Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment