



19 May 2021

Ref: DOIA 2021-1482

J. Armishaw

[fyi-request-14660-c1f078c5@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-14660-c1f078c5@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear J. Armishaw

I refer to your email of 11 February 2021 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry), requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *Could you please share any information relating to the number of spots available for managed isolation over the previous 3 months.*
- *Could you also share any plans to increase capacity of managed isolation and quarantine in the upcoming period, or if there are none, why no further capacity increases have been sought.*
- *Finally, could you please share any information as to the impacts of alternative options to managed isolation for citizens returning from low risk countries (e.g. Kiwis in Australia self isolating at home, a quarantine free zone to Australia) on Managed Isolation and Quarantine availability.*

Please find responses to each of your questions below.

*Could you please share any information relating to the number of spots available for managed isolation over the previous 3 months.*

Please find the attached spreadsheet with the requested information. Please read the attached information and data release caveats when reading the spreadsheet.

*Could you also share any plans to increase capacity of managed isolation and quarantine in the upcoming period, or if there are none, why no further capacity increases have been sought.*

Any decision to increase capacity in the Managed Isolation and Quarantine system rests with the government and at this stage we are unaware of any plans to do so. We have built a sustainable level of capacity within the system, and there is room to safely welcome returning New Zealanders back home at the current capacity levels. Demand for managed isolation is managed through the Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS).

The Ministry is looking to move to a six month booking horizon in the coming weeks, once flight schedules for the Northern Summer period are confirmed by airlines.

However, MIAS relies on accurate flight information, with booking vouchers linked to flights. To secure a voucher, travellers need a confirmed flight. The Ministry has been limited in how far out it could upload vouchers into MIAS due to the unreliability of flight information – flight schedules more than two to three months ahead proving unreliable and susceptible to change.

Over the past few months, the Ministry's Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) team has been working very closely with airlines flying to New Zealand in order to obtain more accurate flight data.

This work, along with a commitment from the airlines to provide more accurate scheduling information for further out dates, means we can soon extend the booking horizon in MIAS, enabling travellers to book vouchers up to six months in advance.

Please find attached an Aide Memoire from the Ministry to Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response, which outlines this plan in more detail.

Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

*Finally, could you please share any information as to the impacts of alternative options to managed isolation for citizens returning from low risk countries (e.g. Kiwis in Australia self isolating at home, a quarantine free zone to Australia) on Managed Isolation and Quarantine availability.*

Quarantine-free travel between New Zealand and Australia commenced on 18 April 2021. Quarantine-free travel between New Zealand and the Cook Islands commenced on 17 May 2021.

The Government continues to consider how arrivals at the border are treated from different locations. Prior to the travel bubble being set up with Australia and the Cook Islands, all designated arrivals from these countries and most of the Pacific were classified as low risk. As such, they were excluded from needing to provide evidence of a negative pre-departure test.

I trust that you find this information helpful. 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/](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



**Tess Ahern**  
Director Health Services  
Managed Isolation and Quarantine