



22 March 2021

Kwanjira Chanthawas  
fyi-request-14768-49632d86@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: DOIA 2021-1635

Dear Kwanjira Chanthawas,

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2021 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA), the following information:

*“My name is Kwanjira Chanthawas. I am currently residing in New Zealand. I'm writing you today to request the official information on the allocation of SMC and RFW applications.*

- 1. The number of SMC and RFW applications that have been allocated. Breakdown by weekly basis from 4th February 2021 to the date this OIA request gets a response. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.*
- 2. The number of applications in the queue waiting for allocation. Breakdown by month. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.*
- 3. The number of applications that the decision has been made and finalized from July 2020 to the date this OIA request gets a response. Breakdown by month. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.”*

## **Our Response**

***Question One: “The number of SMC and RFW applications that have been allocated. Breakdown by weekly basis from 4th February 2021 to the date this OIA request gets a response. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.”***

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has one queue for skilled residence applications. The applications in this queue include Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and Resident from Work (RFW), and are not split into two separate queues based on the application category.

Allocations of applications to immigration officers occur weekly and the number of applications that are allocated is dependent upon processing capacity. The Government is currently reviewing its approach to the New Zealand Residence Programme (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 the same volume and with the same level of resourcing as the previous NZRP allowed for. This has an impact on the number of applications that can be allocated and the timeliness of application processing.

Please see Table one below which provides the number of skilled residence applications that were allocated from the onshore non priority and priority queue, between the periods 01 February 2021 to 08 March 2021. Please note that in February 2021, the Auckland region moved into Alert Level 3 twice which had an impact on the processing of skilled residence applications, and the capacity for immigration officers to be allocated new applications. With reduced processing capacity and reduced ability for some staff to access INZ offices during the COVID-19 response, for several weeks the INZ Manukau office had limited numbers of staff



processing skilled residence applications from the office and reduced productivity for those working from home.

Table One:

Allocation Date	Onshore Non Priority Queue	Priority Queue
1-Feb-21	129	41
8-Feb-21	177	17
15-Feb-21	17	60
22-Feb-21	49	21
1-Mar-21	30	35
8-Mar-21	0	52

**Question Two: “The number of applications in the queue waiting for allocation. Breakdown by month. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.”**

Applications that do not meet the criterion for prioritisation are allocated to an immigration officer in the order they are received. Applications however, can be prioritised or deprioritised if an applicant’s circumstances change.

As of 09 March 2021, INZ is allocating:

- Non-prioritised SMC and RFW applications received in August 2019, and
- Prioritised SMC and RFW applications within two weeks of the application joining the priority queue.

Table two below provides the number of unallocated skilled residence applications in the onshore non priority queue and priority queue as at 09 March 2021, broken down by the month the applications were accepted for processing. Please note 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 will be moved to the priority queue and allocated within two weeks.

Table Two

Month Accepted	Onshore Non Priority	Priority	Total
Aug-19	448	0	448
Sep-19	603	0	603
Oct-19	653	1	654
Nov-19	803	5	808
Dec-19	801	6	807
Jan-20	616	1	617
Feb-20	961	2	963
Mar-20	971	2	973
May-20	93	0	93
Jun-20	1,619	10	1,629
Jul-20	1,176	7	1,183
Aug-20	212	0	212
Sep-20	742	2	744
Oct-20	440	1	441

Nov-20	482	1	483
Dec-20	280	0	280
Jan-21	412	4	416
Feb-21	205	18	223
Mar-21	14	4	18

**Question Three: “The number of applications that the decision has been made and finalized from July 2020 to the date this OIA request gets a response. Breakdown by month. Categorized by priority application and non-priority application.”**

Please see table three below which provides the number SMC and RFW applications decided by INZ during the period 01 July 2020 to 09 March 2021, broken down by the decision month.

Table Three:

Decision Month	Number of Decisions
Jul-20	732
Aug-20	744
Sep-20	788
Oct-20	769
Nov-20	1,194
Dec-20	815
Jan-21	745
Feb-21	541
Mar-21	88

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Hogg  
 General Manager - Border and Visa Operations  
 Immigration New Zealand