



08/04/2021

Adam Irish

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Ref: DOIA 2021-1729

Dear Adam,

Thank you for your email of 8 March requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*"I wish to request under the Official Information Act the target number of residency visas to be granted for the last 5 years each years and the target year year for the next 5 years. I also wish to request how this target is arrived at and calculated. Are the following factors are taken into consideration when developing the total:*

*Net population growth (Births minus Deaths along with net gain or lose of returning citizens) vs the total housing supply and number of new building consents being granted.*

*New Zealand is in the midst of housing crisis and years of inadequate planning on the demand side appears to have contributed to this. It would be reassuring to know that once this pandemic is over the housing crisis won't be further added to."*

The New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) sets a planning range for the number of approved residence visas over a particular period of time, which determines Immigration New Zealand's resourcing and processing capacity for residence visas.

The NZRP planning range is not a specific target or hard cap, as it contains a number of uncapped visa categories within it, which fluctuate according to demand. This means that the main way the Government controls residence is by limiting the number of visas available under different categories, either through numerical caps or through policy requirements.

The planning range for 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2016 was 90,000-100,000 residence approvals (an average of 45,000-50,000 per year). This was reduced to 85,000-95,000 for the 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018 planning range.

In 2018, Cabinet agreed to replace the NZRP with an outcomes-focused approach to align with the Government's vision to improve the wellbeing and living standards of New Zealanders, including through productive, sustainable and inclusive economic growth by:

- filling skills and labour shortages and raising overall skill levels;
- encouraging investment and supporting innovation and exports;
- supporting foreign relations objectives and New Zealand's international and humanitarian commitments; supporting social inclusion, including through family reunification; and
- protecting the security of New Zealanders and the border.

This will change the approach to controlling residence numbers and priorities from one based on a single planning range that spans multiple residence visa categories to one based on managing forecasts of individual resident visa categories.



To support this approach Cabinet agreed new objectives for the NZRP in 2019, that are:

- To maximise the contribution of the NZRP to the economic and social wellbeing of New Zealand and New Zealanders by:
  - attracting skilled workers and business migrants;
  - reunifying the families of New Zealand residents and citizens; and
  - meeting international and humanitarian commitments.
- Managing the overall residence numbers through controlling each of the individual components of the programme.

The planning range for 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019 was set at 50,000-60,000 with the new approach expected to start from 01 January 2020. The transition to the new approach has yet to be implemented due to disruptions.

Immigration New Zealand continues to process residence applications in the meantime at the same volume and with the same level of resourcing as under the last planning range.

The Cabinet papers *New Zealand Residence Programme 2016/17 – 2017/18* and *New Zealand Residence Programme: New objectives and approach to managing residence numbers* provide further information about NZRP planning ranges and the intended changes to the NZRP. These documents are available here:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/9efa98e1ab/new-zealand-residence-programme-2016-17-to-2017-18-redacted-combined-docs.pdf>.

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4577-cabinet-paper-new-zealand-residence-programme-pdf>.

We trust you will find the information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of MBIE's response to your request. 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



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