

# Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Justice  
Minister for Broadcasting and Media  
Minister of Immigration



31 MAY 2021

OIA 21-071

Adam Irish

[fyi-request-15243-3a562e3f@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-15243-3a562e3f@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Adam Irish,

Thank you for your request on 21 April under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for the following information:

*"I request under the Official Information Act if the government when deciding the new New Zealand Residence Programme targets will consider the following impacts:*

- *Total population growth and the immigration rates impact on the availability and cost of housing for New Zealand citizens and recent migrants*
- *Cost on healthcare, superannuation, and education (including the gain of tertiary study government subsidies) from principal applicants and their dependents*
- *The substitution impact of employers not needing to train Kiwis for positions that are being filled by migrants*
- *The impact of future automation technology that will cause significant job and opportunity loss and how having a smaller population may be beneficial*
- *The impact on wages, unions and the labour market from having more people*
- *The impact on social mobility of the domestic population*
- *The impact of population growth on climate change and our natural environment.*
- *Will the NZRP consider migration and population growth in light of the recommendations from the Climate Change Commission's advice to government.*

*I have gone through the current cabinet paper and there does not appear to be any consideration to these matters to date <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/4577-cabinet-paper-new-zealand-residence-%20programme-pdf>."*

As you may know, the New Zealand Residence Programme (NZRP) is the Government's statement on who qualifies for New Zealand residence, under individual visa categories in one of three groups: skilled and business, family, and international and humanitarian.

The NZRP did previously include a planning range, which sets an indicative upper and lower limits for the total number of residence class visa to be approved by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) in a given period. In 2018, Cabinet agreed to replace the numerical planning range with an outcomes-focused approach where the Government controls volumes through policy or operational responses to changes in forecasts or trends for individual resident visa categories.

The transition was not able to be completed prior to COVID-19, and INZ continues to process residence applications at the same level as under the previous planning range (50,000 to 60,000 residence approvals over the 18 month-period from July 2018 to December 2019).

A range of factors are considered in making policy or operational changes to individual resident visa categories, including some you raise. For example, the 2019 changes to the Parent Category Residence Visa considered the impacts on healthcare and superannuation of proposed changes (the relevant Cabinet Paper is publicly available: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/options-for-changes-to-the-parent-resident-visa-parent-category-18-september.pdf>).

However, there is no single document collating all of the factors that have been considered in the development or alteration of the eligibility criteria across all residence categories. While there is briefing material that details the rationale and consideration for individual changes made to residence visas over time, I am withholding those documents in line with section 18(f) of the Official Information Act - that the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

I do not consider that withholding this information is outweighed by the public interest in making the information available.

Some of the factors you suggested also apply to consideration of changes to temporary visas – for example, the temporary work visa reforms considered the impact of changes on the labour market (the relevant Cabinet Papers are publicly available: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/immigration/release-of-immigration-information/>).

You may also be interested to hear that Productivity Commission will be conducting an inquiry into immigration settings to ensure New Zealand's long term prosperity and wellbeing. This will provide us with a better understanding of the impacts of the immigration system on New Zealand, and enable us to strategically optimise immigration settings by taking a system-wide view. This will include consideration of the impacts on the labour market, housing and associated infrastructure, and the natural environment.

I trust you will find the information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of my 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



Hon Kris Faafoi  
**Minister of Immigration**