



29 September 2022

P Thakkar

fyi-request-20461-5428c62a@requests.fyi.org.nz

DOIA 2223-0446

Dear P Thakkar

Thank you for your email of 4 September 2022 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I wish to know,

1. How many days does it currently take for INZ to manually link passports verified by VFS to the existing visa applications? It seems to be taking awfully long time from the time an applicant submits their passport to VFS till it is updated online.

2. How is INZ planning to reduce phone call wait times for those trying to get in touch? I have tried calling each day of a working week and seem to wait forever. I haven't been successful in speaking to any of INZ representatives. The estimated wait times paint a different picture than what actually happens once you are on hold.

Is INZ planning to provide any alternative means of communication to help alleviate excessive wait times?

Our Response

Question One

As at 8 September 2022, Visa Application Centre (VAC) scans are being actioned within 48 hours from being received in the VAC mailbox.

Question Two:

We acknowledge that there is high demand for our services following the Reconnecting New Zealand and the border reopening announcements.

We are actively working to improve wait times in the Immigration Contact Centre (ICC). At present we are experiencing high volumes of calls, and the nature of calls can be complex, and this means the call itself is longer by nature. We are working together across MBIE to find ways to improve our services. This has included, for example, having more Client Services Advisors (CSAs) on higher demand queues and recruiting for the increased call volumes.

ICC began the process of planning and recruiting for the expected workload in September 2021. Since the beginning of this year, we have recruited more than permanent 60 CSAs, and we have another 11 CSAs in the process of being onboarded at the time of writing this response.

As an alternative means of communication, we encourage people to check the Immigration website first, before calling the ICC. The website contains comprehensive information which addresses the vast



majority of questions that customers have. This includes exploring visa options, applying or waiting for a visa, as well as options for moving from one type of visa to another. This information can be found at the following link: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas>

Once an application has been submitted, an applicant can also check the status of their application online. The contact page of the website is structured so that most customers can find the information they require, without the need to make a phone call. This information can be found on the contact page at the following link: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/contact>

For people who do need to speak to our team, wait times can be shorter in the evenings (New Zealand time), so we recommend trying then. Our ICC is operational from 8.00am to 10.00pm Monday to Friday (NZT).

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, or if you require any further assistance, please contact inzoias@mbie.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nelowfar Ghumkhor', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nelowfar Ghumkhor
National Manager, Immigration Contact Centre
Engagement and Experience branch