



Grant Johnson
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Ref: DOIA 2223-0591

Dear Grant Johnson,

Thank you for your email of 22 September 2022, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I am writing to request information regarding the new Straight to Residence (STR) Visa.

1. How many case officers (COs) are currently processing STR applications or are available to process STR applications?

2. INZ Operational Manual sections SR1.1.b states that STR is part of the general skilled migrant residency stream. Does that mean that operationally, the INZ COs who are tasked with processing STR applications are also processing the tail end of the Skilled Migrant Category and Residence from Work (RFW) queue, the last of which was allocated recently to COs? If so, how many applications total in the Skilled Migrant Category (both the new STR and old SMC/RFW) are currently allocated to a CO but have not yet been decided upon (i.e. are under assessment)?

3. INZ Operational Manual sections SR1.1.c states that STR applications are prioritised above "other skilled residence applications". Can you confirm that "other skilled residence applications" in this context refers specifically to SMC and RFW applications? If so, can you explain operationally what form this prioritisation takes? Is the prioritisation done at the level of allocation of applications to COs, or within the work of the COs (i.e. the CO is expected to process all STR applications they have been allocated before working on SMC/RFW applications)?

4. STR was opened for applications on 5 September. Can you provide the number of applications lodged for STR, as well as the number of total people represented by these applications (i.e. including partners/dependent children), by week of lodgement, since the opening of this category? And for each of those weeks of applications lodged, can you break the number of applications down by the current status of those applications using whatever categories INZ attaches to applications (such as: awaiting allocation, allocated/under assessment, approved, or rejected)? If any of this information is being pro-actively released on INZ's website, please include a link to the relevant page.

Our Response

Response one

Straight to Residence (STR) applications are currently allocated between 12 immigration officers.



Response two

Immigration officers have caseloads comprising a range of application types depending on their skills and business needs. Applications can be at all different stages of assessment and may or may not be actionable by the immigration officer. An example of when an application is unable to be actioned is when we are waiting for third party checks and/or information from the applicant.

Please refer to Appendix A, table one for the number of applications for STR and Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) visa applications lodged since 5 September 2022 currently awaiting a decision.

Response three

Prioritisation relates to allocation order as informed by the General Instructions in the immigration operations manual. Applications of the same type are processed in lodgement date order. These instructions do not prevent the visa processing office from prioritising and processing any visa application when the individual circumstances warrant it. Other skilled residence relates to SMC and residence from work visa applications.

Response four

Please refer to Appendix A, table two for the number of applications for STR and SMC visa applications lodged since 5 September 2022. For the current status of these applications broken down by the lodgement week, please refer to Appendix A, table three.

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,



Nicola Hogg
General Manager - Border and Visa Operations
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment