



23 February 2023

Muhammad

fyi-request-21833-c97f1fc3@requests.fyi.org.nz

DOIA 2223-1777

Dear Muhammad

Thank you for your email of 14 February 2023 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1- How many SMC applications are still pending for a decision that was lodged before 20-March-2020? How many immigration officers are working on all SMC applications at the moment?*
- 2- INZ received an internal advice in mid 2022 to conduct the third party checks (NSC) again for paper based SMC visa applications that were submitted before Covid lockdown and are still waiting for a decision. How long usually a NSC check is valid for? How INZ is going to treat those SMC visa applications who are suffered from this advice. Those SMC applicants are already waiting for a long time, in some cases 3 years or more, to get a decision on their application. It was the sole responsibility of INZ to process those applications on time which they clearly failed to do so. This new advice has added additional 6-12 months to the processing time because of delay in NSC checks at the moment. These SMC applicants are suffering more and waiting in a limbo because of overnight policy changes and RV21 despite paying more application fees compared to RV21 and other applications. INZ failed to allocate adequate resources to these SMC visa applications to ensure timely processing. Now, new policy changes and advices come along the way that are clearly affecting these applications. What steps will INZ take to ensure that they treat these applications fairly and it was worth waiting for this long for the applicants? Will these applicants get permanent residency or residence visa without any travel conditions? Most of SMC applicants are already onshore since their application lodgement, and waiting for 3 years and more.*
- 3- What is current processing time of third party checks, especially NSC. In an response on 7 Nov 2022, NZSIS claimed that average processing time was 50 days. It seems that this time has increased many folds recently because many applicants are waiting from 6-12 months for third party checks (evidence from social media posts). Has NZSIS taken any steps to reduce this time without compromising the security and integrity of the process?*
- 4- It is also evident that immigration officers are not supposed to follow up or escalate the third party checks before six months. NZSIS claimed 50 days then why immigration officers need to wait for 6 months to request escalation/follow up?*

This letter is to notify you that MBIE is transferring part 3 of your request to New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS):-

“What is current processing time of third party checks, especially NSC. In an response on 7 Nov 2022, NZSIS claimed that average processing time was 50 days. It seems that this time has increased many folds recently because many applicants are waiting from 6-12 months for third party checks (evidence from social media posts). Has NZSIS taken any steps to reduce this time without compromising the security and integrity of the process?”

This is in accordance with section 14(b)(i) of the Act, which allows me to transfer any request where the information is not held, but is believed to be held by another department, organisation or Minister of the Crown.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Newbery', is positioned below the closing text.

Andrew Newbery
Business Manager – Business Management Team
Immigration New Zealand