



12 April 2023

Ref: DOIA 2223-2043

Al Johnson

Email: [fyi-request-22080-01c428ea@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-22080-01c428ea@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Al Johnson

Thank you for your email of 13 March 2023 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*I'd like to understand the future plan for what was the MIQ system used during the Covid elimination phase.*

*To do that I'd like to be provided with:*

*1. A list of meetings which includes the title and date of the meeting between anyone at MBIE since June 2022 to March 2023 with the subject or discussion therein on the planning for the future of MIQ.*

*These meetings might include other government agencies and if so i want to know which agencies attended each meeting and if the below exist for each meeting I'd like to be provided those too:*

*- the minutes or notes from people who attended*

*- the recordings of any meeting held over Zoom or Teams*

*2. Any prepared documents - whether they are final or draft on the future of MIQ between June 2022 to March 2023*

*3. Any emails or group discussion on Teams between MBIE staff and/or staff at other government agencies which is about the planning for, or, future use of MIQ.*

#### *Introduction*

You have requested information in relation to the *future of MIQ* which could relate to one of *three* workstreams as summarised below:

#### *Workstream One: Reconnecting New Zealand and Decommissioning the MIQ Facilities*

Following an agreement by Cabinet in March 2022, changes to border settings meant most travellers entering New Zealand could self-test on arrival without entering Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ). With fewer people needing to enter MIQ, MBIE's MIQ Group began the process of de-designation and decommissioning the facilities. Decommissioning of the facilities was completed in August 2022 and all MIQ facilities are now closed. MIQ is now a small branch within MBIE and, in addition to workstreams two and three set out below, the team's focus is on managing MBIE's enduring statutory obligations such as debt recovery, ministerial servicing, complaint resolution and Ombudsman engagement.

### *Workstream Two: A Readiness Plan*

Cabinet also directed MBIE to develop a *Readiness Plan* which is intended to bridge the gap between the closure of MIQ facilities and any investment by Government in a longer-term quarantine capability. It outlines details on what steps would be needed to implement quarantine and isolation capability under urgency should legislation be passed requiring a need to reintroduce border restrictions, and the need for people entering New Zealand to quarantine or isolate.

The aim of the plan is to guide, inform and assist decision makers and, if implemented, would be one part of a government-wide response. The *Readiness Plan* includes amendments based on lessons learned over two years of operating MIQ, together with recommendations from the Office of the Ombudsman, feedback from users of the MIQ system, and judicial review findings.

A significant amount of material has already been released in relation to the Readiness Plan, including the plan itself, which can be found here (also refer to *Appendix One* for more details):

[Quarantine & Isolation Capability \(QIC\) Readiness Plan V.3 \(mbie.govt.nz\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/Quarantine-Isolation-Capability-QIC-Readiness-Plan-V.3)

[Quarantine & Isolation Capability \(QIC\) Readiness Plan \(A3 page\) \(mbie.govt.nz\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/Quarantine-Isolation-Capability-QIC-Readiness-Plan-A3-page)

### *Workstream Three: Programme Business Case and National Quarantine Capability (NQC)*

In addition to the *Readiness Plan*, the then Minister for COVID-19 Response also agreed that MBIE develop a Programme Business Case (PBC) for a purpose-designed quarantine network and core-operating model. You can refer to the following proactively released Cabinet Paper, as well as the Minute of Decision and for details (also refer to *Appendix Two* for further details on the NQC):

[A National Quarantine System: Options for the Ongoing COVID-19 Response and Future Pandemic Preparedness \(mbie.govt.nz\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/A-National-Quarantine-System-Options-for-the-Ongoing-COVID-19-Response-and-Future-Pandemic-Preparedness)

[A National Quarantine System: Options for the Ongoing COVID-19 Response and Future Pandemic Preparedness – Minute of Decision \(mbie.govt.nz\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/A-National-Quarantine-System-Options-for-the-Ongoing-COVID-19-Response-and-Future-Pandemic-Preparedness-Minute-of-Decision)

With specific reference to your **question one**, where you request: *a list of meetings which includes the title and date of the meeting between anyone at MBIE since June 2022 to March 2023 with the subject or discussion therein on the planning for the future of MIQ. These meetings might include other government agencies and if so i want to know which agencies attended each meeting and if the below exist for each meeting I'd like to be provided those too: - the minutes or notes from people who attended - the recordings of any meeting held over Zoom or Teams*, we have summarised the key agencies with whom MIQ has met about New Zealand's future quarantine and isolation capability and preparedness.

In drafting the above-referenced Cabinet Paper MBIE consulted with the following agencies: Ministry of Health, Crown Law, New Zealand Customs Service, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Housing and Urban Development, Te Waihangā (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission), Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry for Women, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Transport, New Zealand Police, Te Puni Kōkiri, Treasury, as well as MBIE's Immigration Group.

In terms of the *Readiness Programme* workstream, I can confirm that up to approximately 100 meetings took place with associated minutes produced and the following agencies were involved: Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora, New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), New Zealand Aviation Security Service (AVSEC), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the relevant Iwi, and a large range of MIQ's commercial partners, including the hotels, security and technology companies.

MIQ Policy held a range of weekly meetings over the specified period, totalling up to approximately 250 meetings. Many of these were informal in nature and were predominantly with Treasury and The Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora.

In terms of future preparedness and the PBC, from June to December 2022 there was extensive external engagement with the Ministry of Health, Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora, New Zealand Customs Service, NZDF, AVSEC, New Zealand Police, NZ Treasury, DPMC, NEMA Ministry of Primary Industries, MFAT, relevant Iwi and private sector through workshops, governance meetings and requests for feedback via email. In early 2023, MIQ also reached out to up to 71 interested parties concerning a possible joint-use of a purpose-designed quarantine network and core-operating model. More than 100 internal and external meetings with associated records were held over this time period (from June 2022 to March 2023).

As such, your request is for a vast amount of information that would need to be manually assessed.

This is a significant undertaking and attempting to do so would remove staff from their core duties for a substantial period and the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served.

Moreover, section 12(2) of the Act also requires that official information requested shall be specified with *due particularity* in the request and citing the 'future of MIQ' or the 'future use of MIQ' captures approximately 70% of the work that MIQ has conducted since mid-2022 to date.

Therefore, MBIE is refusing this part of your request for Minutes pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act, *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

With respect to **question two** of your request for: *any prepared documents - whether they are final or draft on the future of MIQ between June 2022 to March 2023*, over and above the proactively released documents set out above, there are several other documents relating to the decommissioning of MIQ and options for a National Quarantine System or Capability, and Future Pandemic Preparedness, have also been proactively released (noting the scope of your request is from June 2022 to March 2023, however most of the documents were published within that date timeframe and tell a story of the MIQ journey that we assess you might be interested in):

- 1) Briefing 2021-4107 dated 9 July 2021: [High-level options for Managed Isolation and Quarantine future infrastructure \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)
- 2) Briefing 2122-0483 dated 17 Aug 2021: [Future MIQ infrastructure - strategic discussion paper \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)
- 3) Briefing 2122-1013 dated 23 September 2021: [Outline of next steps for progressing future MIQ Infrastructure \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)
- 4) Briefing 2122-1959 dated 29 November 2021: [Draft Cabinet paper: Securing funding to maintain MIQ in the short-term \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)
- 5) Cabinet Paper: [Options for Accelerating MIQ Network Transition \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)
- 6) Briefing 2223-0010 dated 12 July 2022: [Improvements to future MIQ room booking and allocation systems \(mbie.govt.nz\)](#)

It is also our intent to proactively release the PBC shortly as well as the list of the documents set out in the table below. We are happy to advise you when the PBC and other documents have been released in due course, which will be in batches as we complete the relevant consultations.

Also, as *part two* of a response to your request, we will provide you with some of the following documents that have already been assessed and released under the OIA (refer end notes).

As such, I am satisfied that the above list of documents already released, or to be proactively released in the table below, satisfy this part of your request, and provide the best summary of what decisions have been made on the future of MIQ and its use than would be encompassed in any minutes.

Therefore, any documents that are going through the proactive release process, or that have already been published, are refused under section 18(d) of the Act, *that information that the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.*

Tracking number	Date	Title
2122-1424	2 Nov 2021	Future MIQ infrastructure - update on development
2122-1675	25 Nov 2021	Outcomes of Programme Business Case on future MIQ infrastructure
2122-2943	3 March 2022	National Quarantine Service Update on Gateway Review of Detailed Business Case on medium-term solution (includes Annex – Gateway Review Report (Feb 2022))
2122-3105	12 April 2022	Scope of work for future isolation and quarantine capability Programme Business Case
2122-4550	30 May 2022	Readiness Plan for re-establishing quarantine and isolation capability <sup>1</sup>
2122-4413	10 June 2022	Update on National Quarantine Capability business case <sup>2</sup> Annex One - NQC Strategic Case summary Annex Two - Example NQC option packages
2223-0269	29 July 2022	Update of the Readiness Plan to re-establish quarantine <sup>3</sup>
	14 Sept 2022	National Quarantine Capability Full Programme Business Case v2.6
2223-0785	15 Sept 2022	Transfer of Quarantine and Isolation functions to the health system
2223-1033	16 Sept 2022	New Zealand's future quarantine and isolation capability- Programme Business Case, draft Cabinet Paper and briefing
2223-1754	11 Nov 2022	Briefing Funding options to progress NQC Cabinet Paper
2223-1925 (Aide Memoire)	23 Nov 2022	Final Cabinet paper covering note: New Zealand's future quarantine and isolation capability
2223-2582	17 Feb 2023	Proactive release of Cabinet paper - New Zealand's future quarantine and isolation capability and associated Cabinet paper
2223-2803 H2022018907 Joint MBIE-Health briefing	13 March 2023	'Roadmap' for the transfer of functions for NZ's future isolation & quarantine capability

<sup>1</sup> This briefing has been released under the OIA and will be provided to you under cover of a separate response.

<sup>2</sup> This briefing has been released under the OIA and will be provided to you under cover of a separate response.

<sup>3</sup> This briefing has been released under the OIA and will be provided to you under cover of a separate response.

With respect to **question three** of your request for: *any emails or group discussion on Teams between MBIE staff and/or staff at other government agencies which is about the planning for, or, future use of MIQ*, we conducted the following key word search across the email accounts of 13 key MIQ officials working on the above workstreams, with these key word strings, for the period 1 June 2022 to 13 March 2023:

“Future Quarantine and Isolation Capability”, “Future MIQ Infrastructure”, “Future Pandemic Preparedness”, “Future of MIQ”, “Readiness Plan”, “National Quarantine Capability”, “National Quarantine Service”, “National Quarantine System”, “Programme Business Case”

This resulted in approximately **23,500** emails.

As such, and as noted above for *question one*, your request is for a vast amount of information that would need to be manually assessed. This is a significant undertaking and attempting to do so would remove staff from their core duties for a substantial period and the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served.

Moreover, section 12(2) of the Act also requires that official information requested shall be specified with *due particularity* in the request. Therefore, MBIE is refusing this part of your request pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act, *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research*.

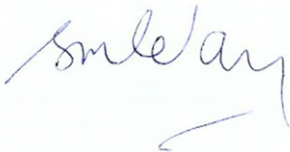
Nevertheless, based on the above information and list of documents, we are willing to assist you if you should choose to refine your request, or request specific documents for release under the OIA.

You can also email us at: [ويا@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:ويا@mbie.govt.nz) with any scoping refinement.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the MBIE website.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman if you are unhappy with this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Shayne Gray  
**General Manager**  
Managed Isolation and Quarantine

## **APPENDIX ONE – READINESS PLAN KEY MESSAGES**

The Readiness Plan is made up of three sections and includes contextual information and experience from the MIQ model managed by MBIE from 13 July 2020 until it's disestablishment. It details both the end-to-end customer journey and the supporting MBIE MIQ functions.

From the outset MIQ has focussed on continuous improvement. The Readiness Plan includes amendments based on lessons learned over two years of operating MIQ, together with recommendations from the Office of the Ombudsman, feedback from users of the MIQ system and judicial review findings.

During its period of operation there were a number of organisations, both public and private, who contributed to the MIQ workforce. These included members of the New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, healthcare practitioners, private security, transport providers and our hotel teams to name a few.

Part of the Readiness Plan has contracts that confirm agreements with key commercial suppliers and government agencies. These arrangements will support implementation of the plan, if required, under urgency. This currently includes seven former MIQ facilities that have signed contracts agreeing to be on standby, giving an approximate total of 1250 rooms to use for isolation and quarantine.

## APPENDIX TWO – NATIONAL QUARANTINE CAPABILITY KEY MESSAGES

- In late 2022 Cabinet agreed to the transfer of responsibility of the National Quarantine Capability (NQC) function from MBIE to the health system by 30 June 2023.
- Cabinet also agreed NQC will continue with continued maintenance, testing, and maturation of New Zealand’s existing Readiness Plan, and in June report back to Ministers with:
  - a draft long-term quarantine and isolation capability strategy,
  - initial investment proposals (high level options) for an evolving portfolio of self, community, and managed quarantine and isolation interventions, and
  - advice on potential alignment of the above with the Emergency Relocation Plan review work being led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).
- This forward-looking work is anticipated to eventually overtake the Readiness Plan as a disease-agnostic response to future public health threats and ensure New Zealand is in a stronger position to protect its most vulnerable communities.
- In order to ensure the transition process is as smooth as possible, a MIQ Transition Project Governance Group has been established and MBIE has been working closely with colleagues in Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand), Te Aka Whai Ora (Māori Health Authority) and the Public Health Agency at Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) on transition planning.