



17 June 2024

Ref: DOIA 2324-2576

Chris McCashin

Email: [fyi-request-26939-3bb1e459@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-26939-3bb1e459@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Chris,

Thank you for your email of 22 May 2024 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *Please provide an estimate of the number of illegal aliens currently in New Zealand.*

*Are you also able to breakdown into various categories. These might be:*

- *Overstayed*
- *Arrived on falsified visa*
- *Smuggled / trafficked in*
- *Other*

*These categories might be different – unsure.*

*Can you also provide the number of these people who are in state houses / emergency housing.*

2. *Also provide deportation numbers per year from 2010 until this year.*

### **Our response**

To clarify, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) does not use the term “illegal aliens”. The Ministry refers to migrants without valid visas in New Zealand as being unlawfully in New Zealand.

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The most recent estimate of people unlawfully in New Zealand was completed in December 2017. That report estimated that there were around 14,000 individuals, who were unlawfully in New Zealand at that time. To ensure the integrity of this data, Immigration New Zealand (INZ) took a sample of approximately 2,000 people from the data set and manually investigated each client record to establish which clients were in New Zealand unlawfully. This proportion was then applied to the complete data set to get an estimate of the total number of individuals unlawfully in New Zealand.

MBIE does not have a breakdown by the categories you have requested. This part of your request is therefore refused in reliance on section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

In accordance with section 18B of the Act we have considered whether consultation with you would allow a different response to be provided; however it is our opinion that it would not.

MBIE encourages those who are unlawfully in New Zealand to engage with officials to regularise their immigration status. Most people depart voluntarily when we contact them. A voluntary departure does not preclude people returning to New Zealand if they are able to obtain the necessary visa, but this will depend on the individual circumstances.

If people unlawfully in New Zealand choose not to cooperate and disengage from us, then they risk being deported and face a prohibition of up to five years on returning to New Zealand as well as having to repay any costs associated with their deportation.

*Can you also provide the number of these people who are in state houses / emergency housing*

MBIE does not record if people are in state houses or emergency housing. This part of your request is therefore refused in reliance on section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

In accordance with section 18B of the Act we have considered whether consultation with you would allow a different response to be provided; however it is our opinion that it would not.

*2. Also provide deportation numbers per year from 2010 until this year.*

The following table shows deportations from New Zealand by financial year broken down by deportation type.

Financial year (July-June)	Client deported	Client self- deported	Voluntary departure
2010/11	315	-	494
2011/12	711	3	1,335
2012/13	752	428	1,328
2013/14	649	521	684
2014/15	511	654	577
2015/16	532	899	461
2016/17	727	713	736
2017/18	635	1,089	1,350
2018/19	454	586	865
2019/20	360	360	549
2020/21	251	178	271
2021/22	154	162	222
2022/23	224	247	242
2023/24	227	207	251

The following caveats apply to the data in the table above.

- The earliest deportation case date is from December 2010. Data prior to this date was recorded in another case management system and is no longer accessible.
- The self-deportation outcome became available in June 2012.
- Deportation data is extracted differently for the pre-2018 and post-2018 period; for the latter the date is based on client's actual departed date, for the former the number is an addition of both case closed date and client departed date.

- Deportation — A person who is unlawfully in New Zealand who has been served a deportation order and departs New Zealand, or a temporary visa holder who was made liable for deportation and departs New Zealand after the date when they may be served with a deportation order.
- Self-deportation — A person who is unlawfully in New Zealand who departs New Zealand of their own volition and at no cost to the Ministry after the date when the person may be served with a deportation order, but they have not been served with such an order.
- Voluntary departure — A person who is unlawfully in New Zealand or is a temporary visa holder who was made liable for deportation and departs of their own volition and at no cost to the Ministry prior to the date when the person may be served with a deportation order.

You can read more information regarding deportations on the Immigration New Zealand website at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/common-topics/deportation>.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact [OIA@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@mbie.govt.nz).

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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Stephanie Greathead  
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