



06 NOV 2024

Paul via FYI

fyi-request-28572-93b40d8a@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Paul

Thank you for your email of 29 September 2024 about your concerns with the current citizenship by grant processing timeframes and the number of applications yet to be allocated to Life Identity and Service Officers (LISO) for processing.

As Minister, I oversee the Government's interests in the Department of Internal Affairs (Department), including its strategy, capability, integrity, and financial performance. I have taken an active interest in citizenship since I became Minister and have been regularly informed by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) about their progress on reducing citizenship processing timeframes.

While the average timeframe for citizenship applications to be decided is just over six months, and 98% of applicants receive an outcome within 18 months of submitting their application, the time required is dictated by the applicant's individual circumstances.

I acknowledge the frustration people experience with long wait times for citizenship applications, and I have asked the Department to focus their efforts on reducing these processing times it is. Improving the efficiency of citizenship processing is a priority for me and we are starting to see some progress made, with average processing time in August being 120 days, down from 189 days in July.

The Department is currently training more staff to process citizenship applications. This will reduce the processing timeframes in the coming months. My intention is for staff to be cross-skilled across different life and identity services offered by the Department, such as citizenship and passport applications, to be able to respond to fluctuations in demand.

The grant of citizenship is a significant decision. Whilst I appreciate people want a decision made quickly, it is important that the criteria set in legislation are met.

I trust this information has been of assistance.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'BvV', written over a light blue circular watermark.

Hon Brooke van Velden

Minister of Internal Affairs