



23 April 2026

Ref: DOIA-REQ-0030408-Ross Munro

Ross Munro

Email: fyi-request-34314-bfd184e7@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Ross,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2026 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

In August 2024 I received the following justification from the Minister of Immigration regarding the proposed doubling of the fee for Partner of a New Zealander Resident Visa applications:

"Please note that the immigration system operates on a cost-recovery basis. The new visa charges reflect the current and real costs associated with direct and broader costs of the immigration system associated with assessing and managing more high-risk applications and increased compliance costs while managing a significant surge in asylum claims, and maintaining Immigration NZ's ICT systems."

The fee subsequently increased from \$2,750 to \$5,360, an increase of 95%, on 1st October, 2024.

Can you please provide itemised details of the "...current and real costs associated with direct and broader costs of the immigration system associated with assessing and managing more high-risk applications and increased compliance costs while managing a significant surge in asylum claims, and maintaining Immigration NZ's ICT systems."

Please see MBIE's response to your request below.

Overview of the visa charge

The total charge for the Partner of a New Zealander Resident Visa is \$5,360. This charge is made up of two components, which are combined at the point of application:

- Visa application fee: \$1,940
- Immigration Levy: \$3,420

These rates were set following the 2024 Immigration Fee and Levy Review.

Reasons for the increase

The increase in charges reflects both updated cost information and a Cabinet decision to shift the immigration system from a Crown subsidised model to a cost to serve model.



As set out in paragraph 48 of the Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS), the proportion of Crown funding for the immigration system reduced from approximately 22 per cent to 9 per cent, with a greater share of costs recovered from the people who benefit from the system.¹

How visa application fees are calculated

Application fees are informed by MBIE's Cost to Serve (CTS) model. This model allocates the direct and indirect costs of visa processing across individual visa products and calculates an average cost per application based on forecast volumes.

For the Partner of a New Zealander Resident Visa, direct costs recovered through the fee include:

- Immigration officer time required to assess applications, based on average assessment times and forecast visa application volumes.
- Supporting assessment activities, including character and identity checks, relationship genuineness assessments, and evidence verification.
- Proportional costs of supporting roles, such as risk assessment and verification staff, allocated using fixed ratios to frontline processing roles.

Indirect processing costs are also recovered through the fee and are allocated based on forecast volumes for each visa products. These include:

- ICT systems that support visa processing, such as online application platforms, case management systems, data storage, and cyber security.
- Contact centre services.
- Property, corporate services, and management overheads that enable immigration processing functions.

Residence class visas generally have higher processing costs than temporary visas due to the greater complexity and assessment requirements involved.

Costs covered by the Immigration Levy

In addition to the application fee, applicants pay an Immigration Levy, which funds wider immigration system costs that cannot be directly attributed to the processing of individual applications. Levy-funded activities include:

- Maintaining and upgrading immigration ICT infrastructure;
- Managing immigration risk at a system-wide level, including compliance and investigations activity;
- Settlement support services; and
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes in schools.

Further information can be found in the following documents:

- [2324-1491 Immigration fee and levy review proposed rates and draft Cabinet paper](#), and
- [Stage 2 Cost Recovery Impact Statement: 2024 Immigration Fee and Levy Review](#)

¹ [Stage 2 Cost Recovery Impact Statement: 2024 Immigration Fee and Levy Review](#)

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.

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.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey O'Dowd', written in a cursive style.

Stacey O'Dowd
Manager, Immigration (Border and Funding) Policy
Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE