



3 June 2026

DOIA-REQ-0032679

Meghanniva
fyi-request-34628-8592c83e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Meghanniva

Thank you for your email of 6 May 2026 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

I request the following information under the Official Information Act.

According to data published by Immigration New Zealand, the number of people under New Zealand's offshore Refugee Quota Programme was 876 in the 2015/16 financial year and 1017 in the 2016/17 financial year; while it was 1514 in the 2023/24 financial year and 1507 in the 2024/25 financial year. Compared with about 10 years ago, this number increased by approximately 48% to 73%.

At the same time, the number of asylum claims made within New Zealand has been at a relatively high level in recent years: 339 in the 2015/16 financial year and 434 in the 2016/17 financial year; while it was 2346 in the 2023/24 financial year and 2269 in the 2024/25 financial year, approximately 5 to 7 times the number about 10 years ago.

According to a recent OIA response, as at 31 January 2026, there were still 4001 asylum claims in New Zealand in an undecided status. The response also stated that the Government currently has no plans to further increase FTE for the refugee status determination system.

According to Immigration New Zealand's published data, Refugee and Protection Claims and Decisions by Financial Year, a total of 1084 decisions were made in the 2024/25 financial year. If calculated only at the rate of 1084 decisions in the 2024/25 financial year, clearing 4001 undecided claims would take more than 3 years.

Based on the above, please provide the following information:

- 1. Please confirm whether MBIE or INZ holds any documents, analysis, advice, assessments, briefings, meeting records, or internal communications relating to whether some places under the offshore Refugee Quota Programme could be reduced, and the corresponding resources, budget, staff, or processing capacity redirected to the processing of asylum claims within New Zealand, in order to address the backlog of domestic claims.*
- 2. Please provide comparative data on resource use between New Zealand's offshore Refugee Quota Programme and the processing of asylum claims within New Zealand for the 2015/16, 2016/17, 2023/24, and 2024/25 financial years, such as fiscal costs, etc.*

In addition, according to a recent OIA response, when reviewing asylum-related rules or practices, New Zealand refers to the practices of comparable asylum-receiving countries, and has consulted the United Kingdom, Canada, and UNHCR.

According to UNHCR data cited by WorldData.info, in initial decisions made under the New Applications category in 2024, the Acceptance rate for the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand was 76.6%, 79.0%, 44.7%, and 25.7%, respectively. Australia had 0 relevant decisions under this category, and therefore should not be included in a direct comparison under the same basis. This indicator reflects the proportion of positive decisions among initial decisions made in 2024, and does not equal the final acceptance rate of applicants who lodged claims in 2024. Under this statistical basis, New Zealand's acceptance rate was clearly lower than that of the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Based on the above, please further provide the following information:

3. Please confirm whether MBIE or INZ holds any analysis, assessments, comparative materials, briefings, internal communications, or policy advice used to explain, assess, or compare the reasons why New Zealand's 2024 asylum claims Acceptance rate was clearly lower than that of the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

If any part of this request needs to be transferred to another agency under the Official Information Act, please transfer it accordingly.

On 11 May 2026 we sought clarification from you requesting further details on question three. You responded on 11 May 2026 with clarification which can be located in the Appendix.

Our Response

We are interpreting your request for fiscal costs relating to the Refugee Quota Programme as costs relating to running of the Māngere Refugee Centre.

The costs in FY24/25 for the Refugee Quota Programme at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre were \$37.1m and in FY23/24 were \$36.1m. This includes offshore selection, medical screening, travel, the reception programme at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre, transitioning refugees into the community and internal support functions. The costs also provide for processing refugees under the Refugee Family Support Category including flights and medical screening, however this cohort settles directly into the community. These totals do not include the wider settlement support costs, some interpretation costs for services provided at the centre, and costs relating to the Refugee Health Liaison Team based at Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

The costs in FY24/25 for asylum claims processing were \$8.8m and in FY23/24 were \$6.0m. The costs include processing staff, travel, legal, interpretation and internal support functions.

We do not hold comparative data on resource use between New Zealand's offshore Refugee Quota Programme and the processing of asylum claims within New Zealand for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years. Additionally, we do not hold information for Questions 1 and 3. These parts of your request are refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information requested is not held by MBIE, and we have no grounds for believing the information is held by another department or more closely connected to the functions of another department.

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 blue ink that reads "Fiona Whiteridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F'.

Fiona Whiteridge
General Manager Refugee and Migrant Services
Immigration New Zealand

Appendix: Clarification DOIA-REQ-0032679

-----Original Message-----

From: meghanniva <fyi-request-34628-8592c83e@requests.fyi.org.nz>

Sent: Monday, 11 May 2026 7:42 pm

To: INZ OIAs <INZOIAs@mbie.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Clarification request: DOIA-REQ-0032679-Meghanniva CRM:0306315

Dear INZ OIAs,

For question 3, the background and details are as follows:

1. This request also refers to another OIA response published on FYI, where it was stated that the United Kingdom, Canada, and **【UNHCR】** were consulted.
2. This question refers to WorldData.info's 2024 asylum data, which is based on UNHCR data.
3. The comparison is the Acceptance rate for initial decisions in 2024.
4. The request is for any internal material explaining, assessing, or comparing why New Zealand's Acceptance rate was lower than the rates in the other relevant countries listed in the WorldData.info pages below.

OIA page :

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffyi.org.nz%2Frequest%2F34214-record-high-asylum-backlog-staffing-policy-basis-and-whether-the-government-reassessed-its-approach&data=05%7C02%7CIZla.Corby%40mbie.govt.nz%7C5614de94b6ce4e0bc21e08dea35cba%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C639141313335898911%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIlwLjAuMDAwMCIiIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOIjoiTWFpbGlldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YZhZrTPyYAlVjuEBkUfCKIzUOT66EWiqH4qc%2FbYfVB0%3D&reserved=0>

WorldData.info pages:

New Zealand:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worlddata.info%2Foceania%2Fnew-zealand%2Fasylum.php&data=05%7C02%7Cizla.Corby%40mbie.govt.nz%7C5614de94b6ce4e0bc21e08deafa35cba%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C639141313335930733%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWU%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=OZsuzKR9TLU9qU3wARHhstt0HZ9objbodSnQ%2Byoz7CDQ%3D&reserved=0>

United States:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worlddata.info%2Famerica%2Fusa%2Fasylum.php&data=05%7C02%7Cizla.Corby%40mbie.govt.nz%7C5614de94b6ce4e0bc21e08deafa35cba%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C639141313335949787%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWU%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=R8QNFmxv6YiLchS39F%2BQoJOVvH6G3yGsPH%2FYHTz0eo%3D&reserved=0>

Canada:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worlddata.info%2Famerica%2Fcanada%2Fasylum.php&data=05%7C02%7Cizla.Corby%40mbie.govt.nz%7C5614de94b6ce4e0bc21e08deafa35cba%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C639141313335968078%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWU%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=5EzrDTaXkVV7QHK%2B6WUv5Lgmgudn%2FPvrtYIY%2Fn3W7yQ%3D&reserved=0>

United Kingdom:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worlddata.info%2Feurope%2Fuk-kingdom%2Fasylum.php&data=05%7C02%7Cizla.Corby%40mbie.govt.nz%7C5614de94b6ce4e0bc21e08deafa35cba%7C78b2bd11e42b47eab0112e04c3af5ec1%7C0%7C0%7C639141313335985855%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWU%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0CZbtCrFD%2F7%2FWuynOF8a6bWWcs8duoIBhKJNhSzmZrI%3D&reserved=0>

Yours sincerely,

meghanniva