

3 April 2018

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Dear Jonathan Red

I refer to your email of 11 March 2018 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

"As I understand under the Immigration Amendment Regulations in 1999 Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates were added to the list of visa waiver countries where they remain under the current legislation.

My first question is whether the New Zealand visa policy is based on reciprocity in general and my second question is whether the aforementioned countries, according to the information held by the Ministry, maintain reciprocal visa waivers for NZ citizens?"


The decision on whether New Zealand should grant visa waiver status to a particular country is not based on reciprocity. New Zealand generally makes decisions on visa waiver status based on an assessment of the likely risks and benefits for New Zealand. Potential benefits such as tourism, trade and foreign relations (including whether a visa waiver would help to achieve improvements in access for New Zealand visitors to the other country) are weighed against any possible immigration and other border security risks.

Of the countries you have mentioned, five follow the same approach as New Zealand does, and a visa is issued on arrival. Only Saudi Arabia requires a visa to be issued before arrival with an approximate cost of NZ\$321, depending on length of stay and other factors. The other countries' fee structures are as follows;

- Kuwait: visa on arrival for 3 Kuwaiti Dinar (approx. NZ\$14)
- Bahrain: visa on arrival, no fee
- Oman: visa on arrival for 5 Omani Riyal (approx. NZ\$18)
- Qatar: visa issued on arrival, no fee
- United Arab Emirates: visa issued on arrival, no fee

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek a review of this response by the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Adams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wendy Adams
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade