



BRIEFING

Update on MIQ capacity and the implementation of the Managed Isolation Allocation System

Date:	5 November 2020	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-1194

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Note the current capacity constraints in MIQ over the pre-Christmas period, and the implementation of the MIAS system	6 November 2020

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Melleny Black	General Manager Policy, Managed Isolation and Quarantine Unit	-	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Privacy of natural persons	Adviser – Head of Managed Isolation and Quarantine	-		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Ministry of Health, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Transport, Customs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Minister's office to complete:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



BRIEFING

Title

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Purpose

To update you on current capacity constraints in MIQ over the pre-Christmas period, and the implementation of the MIAS system.

Executive summary

Demand on MIQ facilities between now and Christmas 2020 means that the facilities will be operating at near capacity for the next seven weeks, with little room for additional bookings for returning New Zealanders via the Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS).

MIAS has been put in place to help manage the timing of people entering New Zealand, so that we can guarantee their place in a managed isolation facility, which is necessary to keep them and all New Zealanders safe.

Implementation of MIAS was accompanied by an extensive awareness campaign, which saw thousands of people book their vouchers in the first hours that the system went live. Since 25 September, up to 95 per cent of passengers arriving have had a voucher. Since 3 November, passengers are required to have a voucher or have a special allocation before they can board a flight to New Zealand.

Legal professional privilege

Looking out past the holiday period, pressure on MIQ capacity is predicted to reduce; which will allow for more New Zealanders to return and consideration to be given to how other groups can be accommodated in the facilities.

Work is underway to lead to improvements in the management of demand into MIQ and our capacity to respond to ongoing demands from New Zealanders and other cohorts. This work includes: consideration of enhancements to MIAS functionality; understanding the implications for demand arising from the Trans-Tasman arrangement; and implications for MIQ that might arise from work underway in the Ministry of Health as they look to refine and improve the elimination strategy.

Recommended actions

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Note** the current capacity constraints in MIQ over the pre-Christmas period, and the implementation of the MIAS system.

Noted

- b **Note** the attached talking points for a possible oral item at Cabinet on Monday 9 November 2020, and attached key communications lines.

Noted



Melleny Black
**General Manager Policy, Managed Isolation
and Quarantine Unit**
Ministry of Business, Innovation and
Employment



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Recovery

05 / 11 / 2020

15 / 11 / 2020

Background

1. On 9 April 2020, the Director-General of Health issued an Order (under section 70 of the Health Act 1956) requiring all people entering New Zealand by air to undergo managed isolation or quarantine (MIQ) in an approved facility for 14 days, with very limited exemptions.
2. Since June 2020, MIQ capacity has expanded to 32 facilities located in five regional locations (Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Wellington and Christchurch), with an occupational capacity of 6,261 people at any one time.
3. To ensure arrivals into New Zealand did not exceed available MIQ capacity, in July 2020, Cabinet agreed to put in place an interim airline quota system to limit the number of people airlines could bring into the country.
4. To address the limitations with this system, Cabinet also agreed to put in place an online allocation system that would apply to all people coming into New Zealand by air (other than people who are exempt), including a legal requirement on all passengers to have a pre-booked place in a managed isolation facility (MIF). This became mandatory on 3 November 2020.
5. Following Cabinet's direction the Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) was developed. MIAS is a web-based platform that manages the flow of New Zealand citizens, residents and visa holders coming into MIQ and enables a more efficient allocation of people into MIFs. MIAS went live on 5 October 2020, allowing most people to be able to initially voluntarily confirm their place in MIQ online. To date, MIAS has 32,660 secured allocations (passengers), 51,558 registrations and issued 21,750 vouchers¹. MIAS operates on a first comes, first served basis for those legally entitled to enter New Zealand (irrespective of citizenship and residency status).
6. To date, demand has not exceeded total supply and the composition of those returning to New Zealand has predominately been New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. Over this period, government has kept in place highly restrictive immigration settings.

Operational capacity and contingency

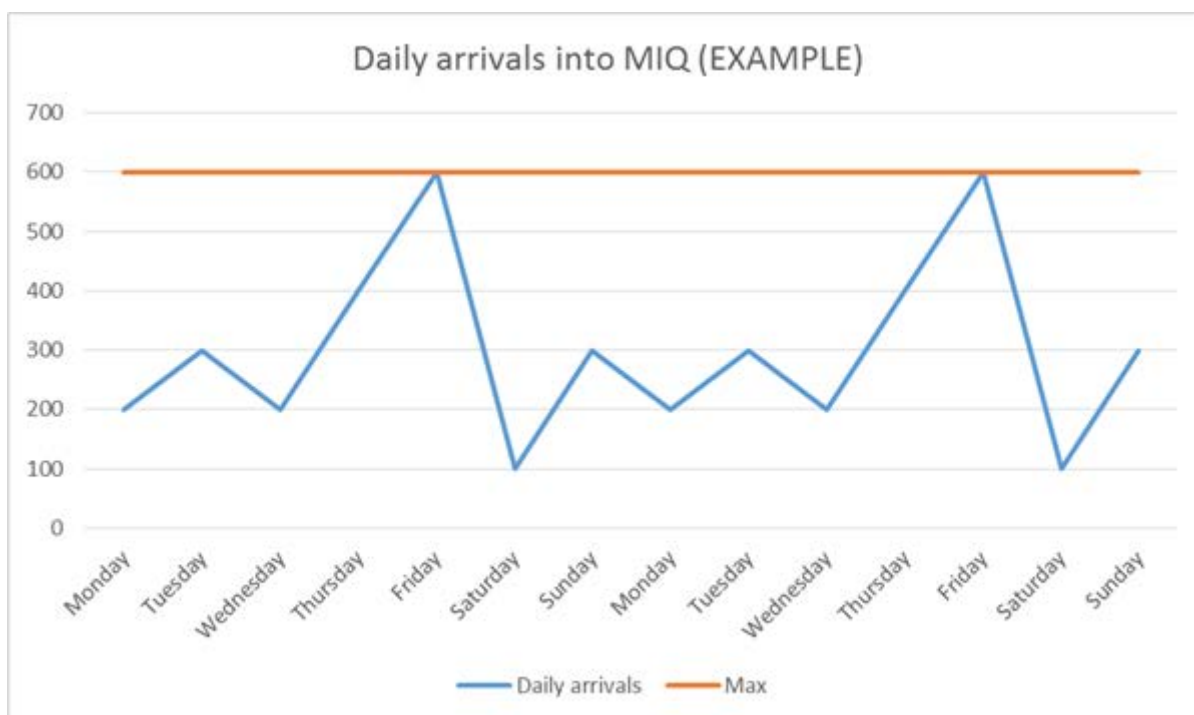
7. The MIQ system has an operational isolation capacity of around 6,260 people at any one time (this fluctuates slightly due to operational issues), from which the MIAS system allocates vouchers. Operational capacity is a subset of the total capacity we hold. It reflects the number of places available once rooms are held for the following reasons:
 - a. held aside for quarantine (306 rooms)
 - b. rooms empty due to imminent arrivals
 - c. rooms held for 501 deportees from Australia
 - d. rooms used for short-term stay Aircrew
 - e. rooms used for short-term stay mariners
 - f. rooms held for contingencies and operational flexibility (approximately 300 rooms)
 - g. rooms being cleaned (approximately 500 rooms at any one time).
8. Room utilisation fluctuates, but sits around 1.39 people per room. The contingency provides resilience, for example allows for MIQ to manage small spikes over operational capacity, and to issue a limited number of emergency-allocations when there is a valid and urgent need to enter New Zealand.

¹ Dated 5 November 2020.

MIQ is now operating near full capacity

9. As noted above, MIAS allocates available spaces on a 'first-come first-served' basis. It was designed, built and implemented at pace to meet the immediate need to manage demand. As a minimum viable product delivered under time constraints, MIAS was not built with the functionality required to prioritise the allocation of spaces in MIFs to certain cohorts over others (e.g. allocating spaces to New Zealanders over non-New Zealanders).
10. The requirement to hold a MIAS voucher to enter New Zealand became mandatory on 3 November 2020. Prior to this there was a one month grace period where the MIAS system and the airline quota were run in parallel as the MIAS system bedded in and the MIAS awareness campaign was implemented. The airline quota system was stood down on 3 November on agreement of senior MBIE and Ministry of Transport Officials (in accordance with the relevant delegation). MIAS is now the sole MIQ demand management tool.
11. Due to unprecedented demand, MIQ will be operating at near full capacity from now until Christmas. As at 5 November 2020, the earliest that travellers can now book a place in MIQ using the online MIAS is 26 December.² Indicative of this demand, even the allocation set aside for the purpose of facilitating emergency or urgent travel is already largely allocated for this period.³ The graph below shows daily arrivals into MIQ for the period of 19 October to 1 November 2020.

Figure 1: Daily arrivals into MIQ for the period of 19 October to 1 November 2020



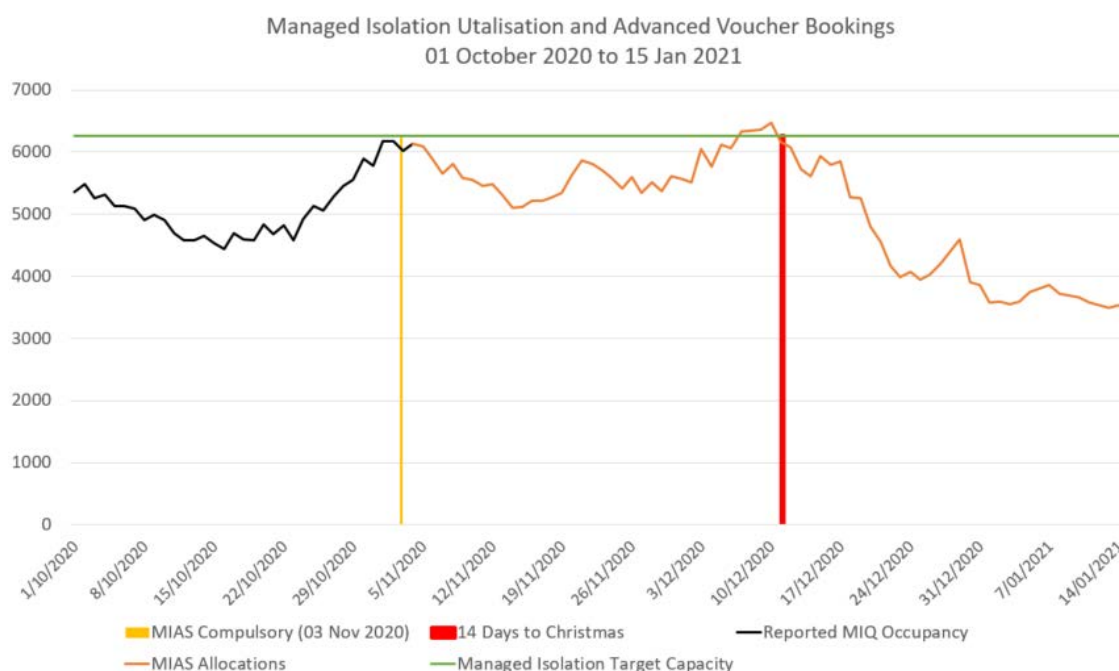
12. More than 40,000 people are expected to go through MIQ over the next three months⁴. To put this into perspective, between April and October this year just over 63,000 people went through MIQ. It is uncertain as to when this spike in demand for places in MIQ will abate. However, based on current forecasts and trends it may continue until at least mid-January as returnees, who are unable to secure a place in managed isolation before Christmas, look to defer their travel until early next year (as shown in Figure 2 below).

² This was current as of 5 November, and is subject to change.

³ Although many of these requests do not meet the threshold for emergency or urgent travel based on the current assessment criteria.

⁴ As of 4 November, more than 31,500 MIQ vouchers for this period have already been issued.

Figure 2: MIQ Utilisation and Advanced Voucher Bookings (1 October to 15 January 2021)



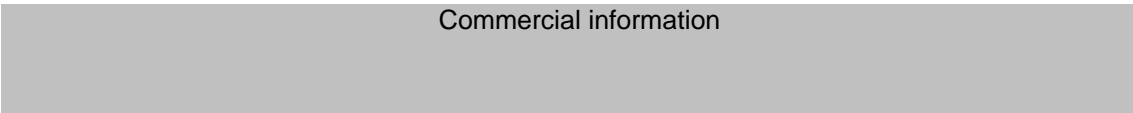
13. From an MIQ operational perspective, the present pressure on MIQ facilities mean we are unable to facilitate the arrival of any new large groups (those not already planned for) until sometime in January 2021. Additionally, for brief periods between now and the end of the year, it may be necessary to draw on our contingency allocation⁵ to ensure that all travellers holding an MIQ voucher can be accommodated in managed isolation on arrival in New Zealand.

High-demand in the pre-Christmas period was anticipated

14. We had anticipated high demand over the pre-Christmas and New-year period. Based on previous demand and forecasts, we considered that this higher period of demand could be accommodated within existing capacity, and that emergency travel cases could be accommodated through the special allocation process.
15. An extensive awareness campaign was undertaken advising returnees of requirements to have a booked place. From the launch of MIAS to 2 November 2020 (i.e. the period which having a voucher was not a mandatory requirement) up to 95 per cent of passengers arriving at airports had a voucher.
16. Immediately before MIAS became mandatory on 3 November 2020 there was a spike in demand and a changes in behaviour as a result of factors such as the following (some of which are continuing to impact the system):
- some airlines during the month of October oversold their quotas
 - the worsening global epidemiological outlook and steady rise in COVID-19 case numbers particularly in the Americas, Europe, Africa and the Middle East airline ticketing uptake significantly increased (around an average of 70% and 100%)
 - more people who have purchased tickets are checking in for these flights and travelling (fewer no-shows).

⁵ Rooms set aside in the event that one or more of our managed isolation facilities have to be evacuated due to an emergency such as a fire or earthquake.

Measures currently being taken to alleviate some of the pressures on the MIQ system

17. A temporary cap was introduced to the vouchers available online on the MIAS system following the significant spike in demand and risk of people overwhelming the system. Officials are now looking to remove this cap, decisions will need to be made about the proportion made available online and held-back for emergency and time-critical travel.
18. We also note that a proportion of vouchers currently held may be for cancelled flights or people no longer intending to travel. We are working with airlines to identify these vouchers and provide space to emergency allocations, and if there is sufficient supply, we may put them back into the MIAS system for other people to book.
19. MIQ is a capacity driven system. MIAS is intended to ensure demand does not exceed supply, and it is doing that. In order to ensure that the situation remains manageable (and to ensure that we retain resilience to respond to emergencies), we have put in place further short-term measures to address the current situation, including:
 - a. airlines were asked to voluntarily halt ticket sales for travel between 29 October and 3 November and to rebook some passengers onto later flights, and we are continuing to work closely with airlines to ensure current ticketing sales do not exceed capacity and that all returnees have an MIQ voucher before boarding their flight to New Zealand
 - b.  Commercial information
20. So that we can still facilitate some emergency travel during this period, MBIE has tightened the criteria for accessing the allocation for emergency and urgent travel. This allocation can now only be accessed by people on application who:
 - a. are legally entitled to enter New Zealand, and
 - b. have an imminent threat to their life or serious risk to their health, which can only be resolved by travelling to New Zealand on the specific date they have requested.
21. As at 5 November 2020, since the criteria were tightened on 30 October, 730 people have applied and 10 emergency allocations have been granted (we are continuing to process these applications).
22. *Annex Three: MIQ Weekly Dashboard for 4 November 2020*, provides additional detailed information about MIQ capacity.

Future decisions

23. As part of the ministerial decision making process for class exemptions, there are upcoming decisions about whether to allow a number of groups entry into NZ for the purpose of work or study. These include decisions on:
 - a. RSE workers (potentially 2,000 in January to February 2021)
 - b. international students (up to 1,000 bachelors and masters and family members before Semester 2, July 2021)
 - c. shearers (up to 60 before April 2021)
 - d. strategic international media programme (up 200 from March 2021).
24. The remaining 207 international mariners have an existing class exemption. Officials will update you on operational planning and arrangements for this group.
25. In addition, over time we expect to see ongoing requests to admit and accommodate sports teams and cultural groups.

26. While looking out to January bookings for MIQ reduce, the requests and proposals outlined above will need to be carefully prioritised (being mindful of the fact that future demand beyond four to six weeks is difficult to predict).

Legal risks (legally privileged)

Legal professional privilege



Planned improvements and future settings to support and manage demand for MIQ

34. A range of work streams are underway that will lead to improvements to the management of demand into MIQ and our capacity to meet demand from New Zealanders and other cohorts critical to our recovery efforts:
 - a. as a priority, we are working on advice regarding enhancements to MIAS functionality that would mitigate the risk of New Zealanders facing an unjustified delay in entering New Zealand, as more visa holders enter the country
 - b. we are working to understand the implications of further states/territories unilaterally opening ahead of the Trans-Tasman arrangement coming into force, and working to understand the impact of passengers transiting through New Zealand to Australia.
35. We are working with the Ministry of Health as they progress work to refine and improve the Elimination Strategy from a public health perspective, looking at the 'best' mix of public health measures. Border settings and managed isolation and quarantine are the first area being explored in this work with a focus on the latest evidence, understanding of the level of residual public health risk (after measures are in place) and the costs (broadly defined).

Next steps

36. We will provide further advice on MIQ demand management. Officials are available to meet with you to discuss your priorities and objectives for the MIQ system.

Annexes

Annex One: Talking points for Cabinet Oral Item on Monday 9 November 2020

Annex Two: Key communications messages

Annex Three: MIQ Weekly Dashboard for 4 November 2020

Annex One: Talking Points for possible Cabinet Oral Item on Monday 9 November 2020

Update on MIQ capacity and the implementation of the Managed Isolation Allocation System

In summary, this section contains Talking Points that were a summation of information being released in this paper. The Talking Points were prepared and offered by MBIE/MIQ, but they do not necessarily represent messages that the Minister for Covid-19 Response accepted or ever used.

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Annex Two: Key communications messages

- Ensuring the safety of all New Zealanders during this global pandemic is critical, and there is limited capacity in our Managed Isolation facilities.
- On 3 November using the online Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) to secure a place in before coming to New Zealand became compulsory.
- MIAS helps us manage the timing of people entering New Zealand so we can guarantee there is space to safely accommodate all arrivals. Everyone flying to New Zealand must have a valid MIAS voucher before they can board their flight.
- Due to high demand space, in Managed Isolation is extremely limited leading into the summer holidays. We're asking people to be flexible and if there are no available places in managed isolation on their preferred date, to check if there are any places available on a later date. Every New Zealander can come home, but possibly not on the date they would like.
- We are strongly encourage everyone who has already bought tickets to confirm with their airlines that their flight is operating, and to make sure that they hold an MIQ voucher. If people currently hold a voucher, but their flight has been cancelled, or they do not intend to fly, we ask that they cancel their voucher.
- People can apply for an emergency allocation if you are a New Zealand citizen or resident-class visa holder who has an imminent threat to their life or serious risk to health, which requires urgent travel to New Zealand. We expect that very few approvals would be granted, and it is important to note that people still need to complete their 14 days Managed Isolation.
- People can visit the miq.govt.nz page to make an application if they believe they meet those criteria.
- People requiring urgent support overseas should contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade through their local embassy or consulate.
- Further information is available at miq.govt.nz or by contacting 4 931 5720.

Annex Three: MIQ Weekly Dashboard for 4 November 2020

MANAGED ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Managed Isolation and Quarantine Dashboard

Weekly Update: 04 November 2020

Up to and including Monday 02 November 2020 unless otherwise noted

Produced by MIQ Intelligence, Data and Insights

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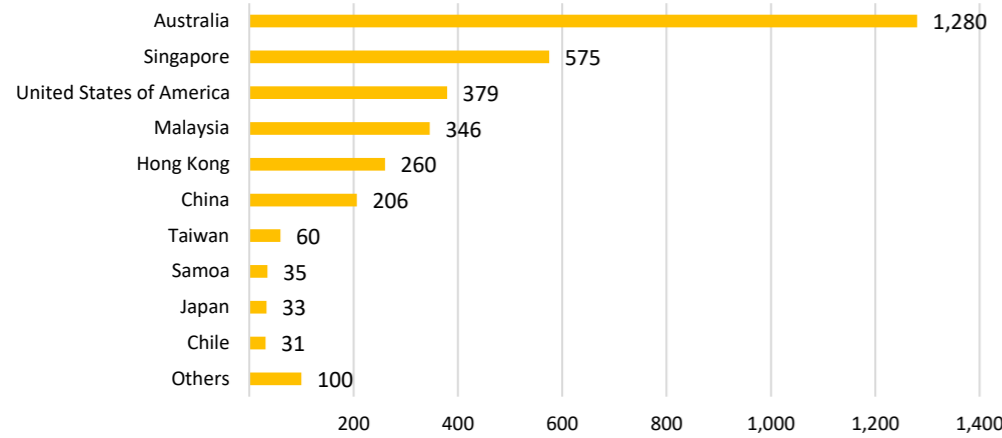
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All Arrivals Into New Zealand

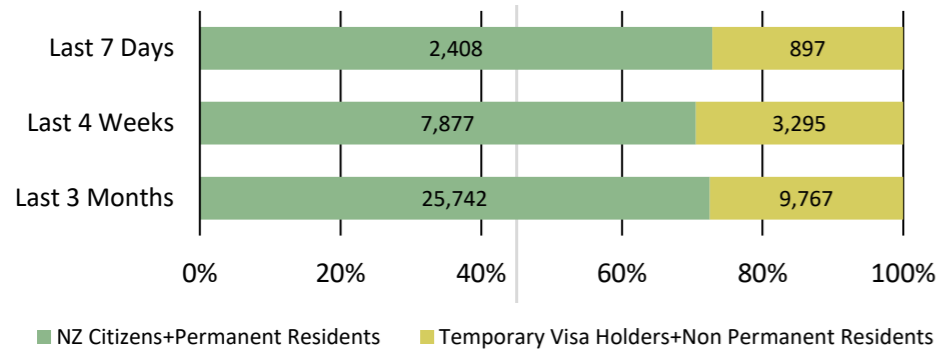
	Week Ending	
	26 Oct (Prev Period)	02 Nov (Latest Period)
Total Arrivals since 10 April 2020	62,163	65,468
Arrivals in last 7 days	2,847	3,305

Port of Embarkation Before New Zealand

From 27 October 2020 to 02 November 2020



Arrivals into New Zealand by Type



Anticipated Maritime Arrivals and Departures

Port Region	Last 7 Days 28 Oct - 3 Nov			Next 7 Days 4 Nov - 10 Nov		
	Vessels	Off	On	Vessels	Off	On
Auckland	2	3	27	1	1	7
Bay of Plenty	3	16	17	0	0	0
Taranaki	2	12	13	0	0	0
Hawkes Bay	1	14	14	0	0	0
Northland	1	11	11	1	6	6
Total	9	56	82	2	7	13

There has been a change in data source which now comes from MIQ Maritime Operations. The 'Next 7 Days' portion reflects the projected number of transfers on and off as at Friday 6 November 2020 and is subject to continual refreshes as information becomes available

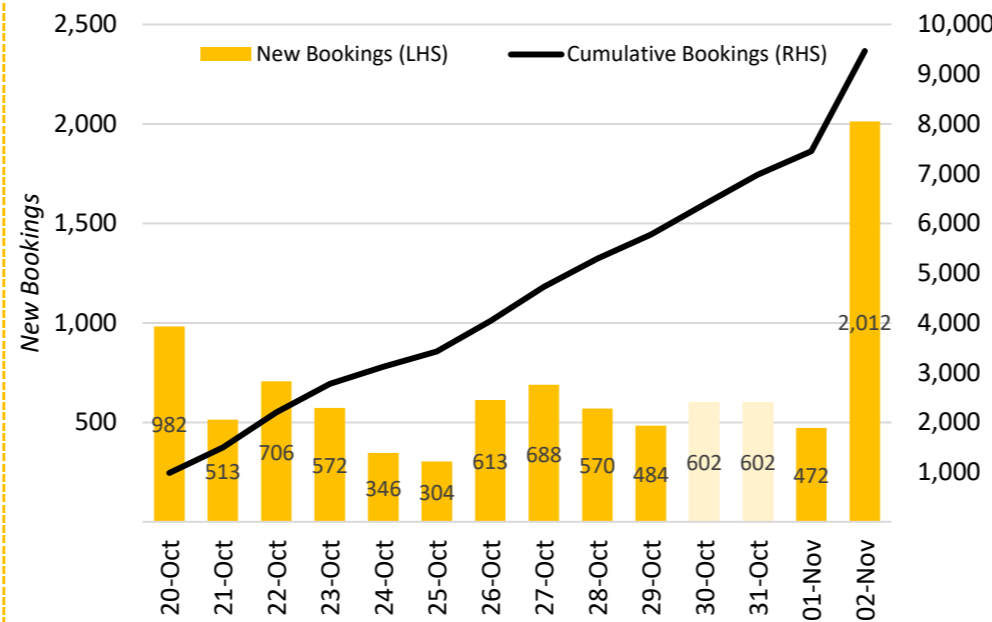
Managed Isolation Exemptions

From 28 October 2020 to 04 November 2020

	Week Ending	
	28 Oct (Prev Period)	04 Nov (Latest Period)
Total Exemptions Approved - year to date	345	368

Type	Year To Date					
	Application Made	Approved	Declined	withdrawn/ not progressed by the	In progress	
Total	2,753	368	1,501	693	191	
Joining Someone in MIF	311	199	22	65	25	
Medical Exemptions	363	20	189	109	45	
Exceptional Circumstances	1,961	91	1,289	462	119	
Transit Passenger	118	58	1	57	2	

Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS)

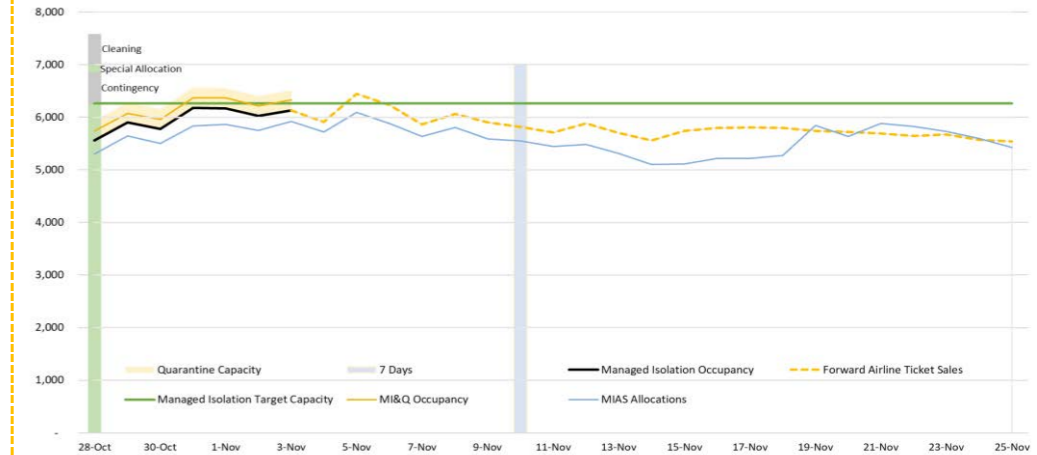


The above graph shows daily and cumulative bookings made over two weeks. The spike on 2 Nov represents high numbers of registrations for 15 Dec, being the first date made available and raised awareness of this.

Note the 30/31 Oct, where we can determine the number of bookings across these two days but cannot determine the allocation to the two, so have assumed an equal allocation.

Facilities

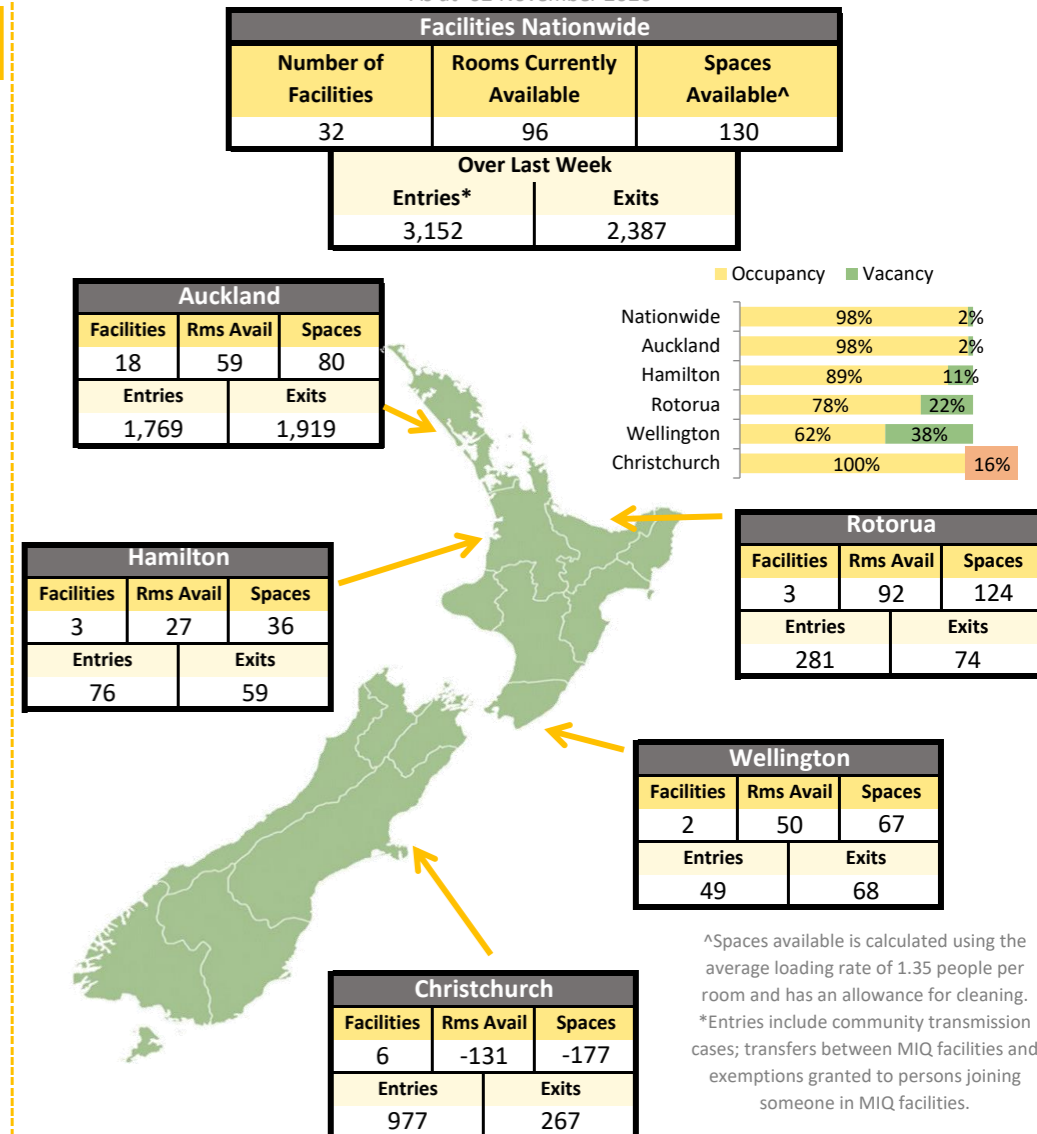
People in Managed Isolation and Capacity



MIAS allocation for returnees will be compulsory from 3rd November. MIQ are working with airlines to ensure that all ticket holders have booked through the Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS).

Regional Isolation and Quarantine (RIQ) Capacity

As at 02 November 2020



[^]Spaces available is calculated using the average loading rate of 1.35 people per room and has an allowance for cleaning. *Entries include community transmission cases; transfers between MIQ facilities and exemptions granted to persons joining someone in MIQ facilities.

MANAGED ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Managed Isolation and Quarantine Dashboard

Weekly Update: 04 November 2020

Up to and including Monday 02 November 2020 unless otherwise noted

Produced by MIQ Intelligence, Data and Insights

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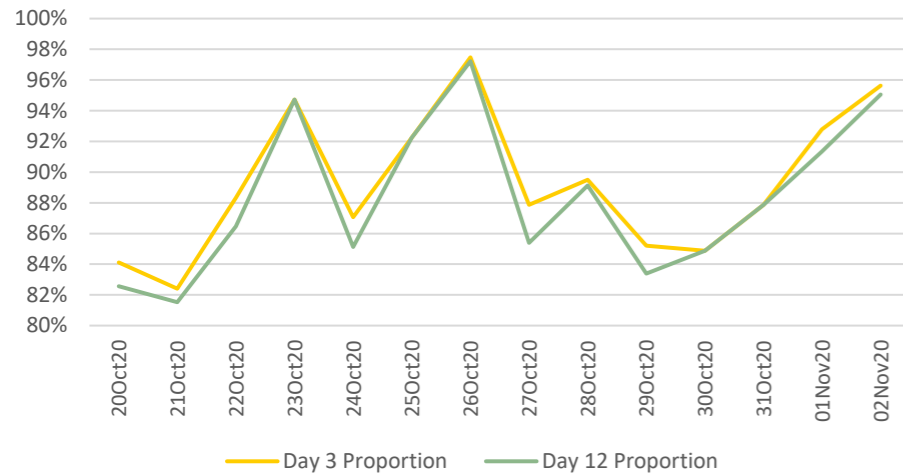
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HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Cases and Tests

	Week Ending	
	26 Oct (Prev Period)	02 Nov (Latest Period)
Current active cases identified at MI&Q facilities	70	66
People in MI&Q that tested positive in last 7 days	12	51

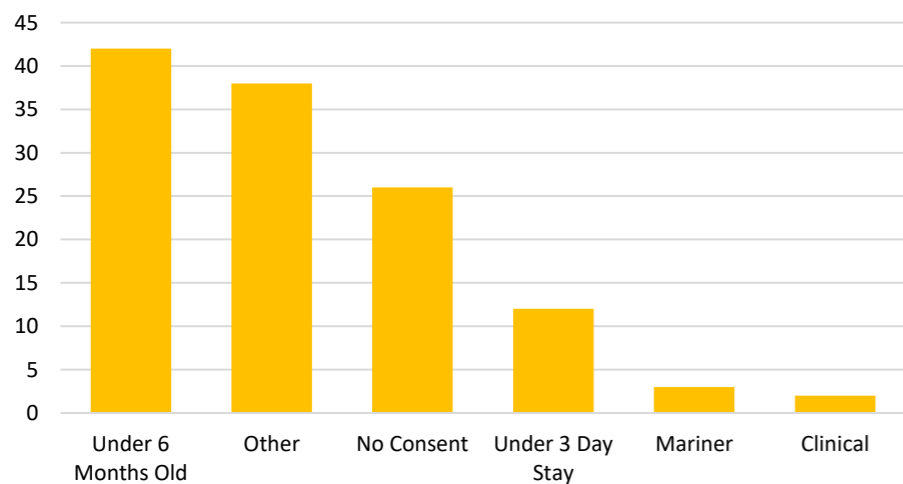
COVID-19 Tests Taken in MIQ

Returnee Day 3 and Day 12 Testing Rate in MIQ



Ministry of Health have advised that Day 3 and 12 guest testing by departure date percentages are lower on days which include guests who have stayed in a MIF temporarily (eg. In transit and have an international flight 3 days after arriving or mariners who are transferred to a port). These guests do not stay long enough to get day 3 or day 12 tested and so drive down the percentages.

Refusal Reasons for Swabs in MIQ - Last 14 days

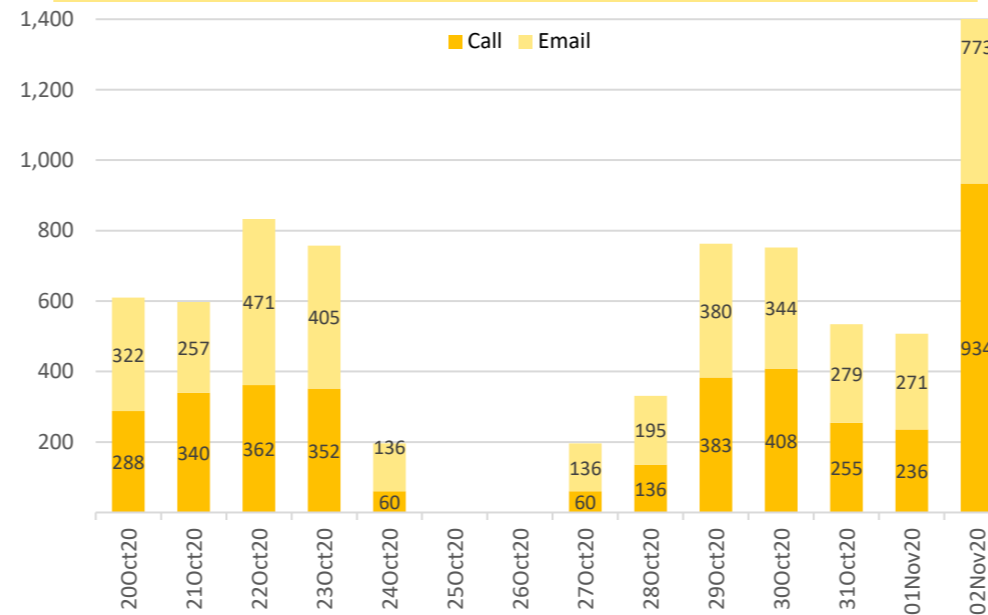


MIQ Contacts Received

As at 02 November 2020

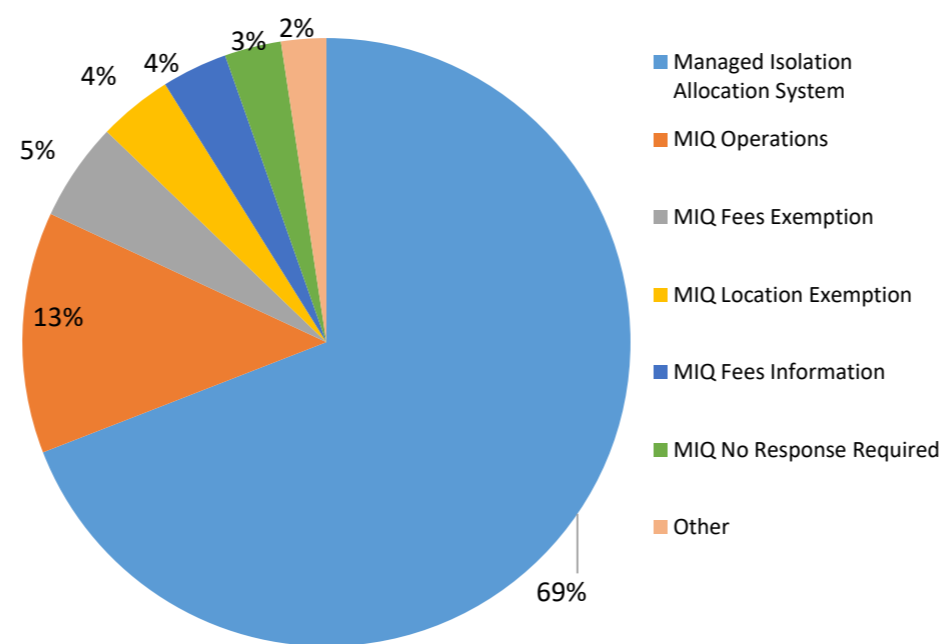
	Week Ending ^^	
	26 Oct (Prev Period)	02 Nov (Latest Period)
Total Contacts Received by MIQ in the last 7 days	2,993	2,576

MIQ Type of Contact Received

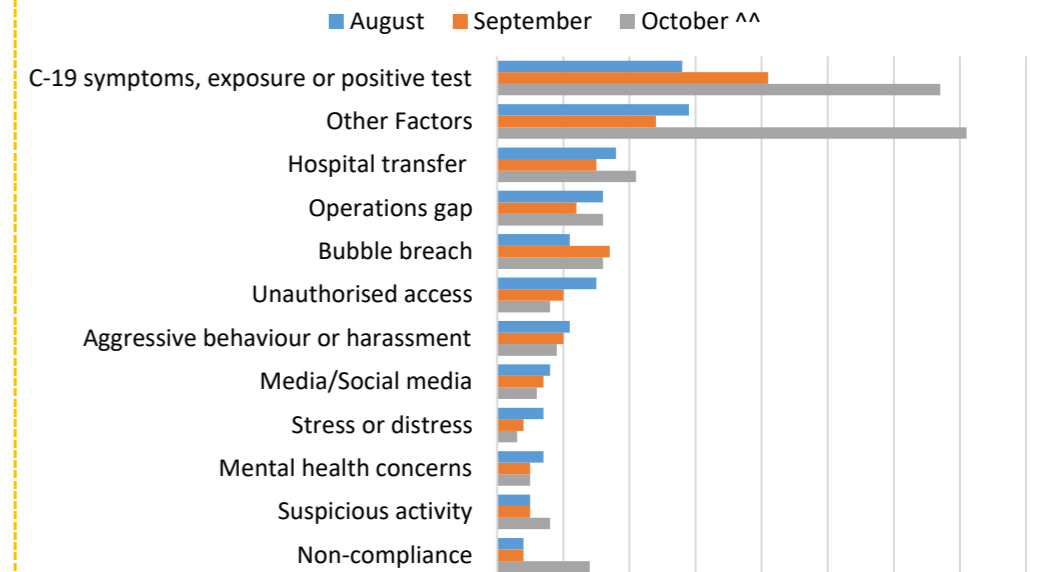


^^ No information was recorded on 25/26 Oct so the week totals exclude the contacts made seven days later on the 01/02 Nov. Therefore, the week totals correspond to a 5-day week

MIQ Contact Result - Last 7 Days



Event Register Monthly Comparison



Each event may include multiple factors, for which each factor is included in the above graph. Therefore, the sum of all factors will add up to more than the total number of events. ^^ Data inclusive up until 30 October

Visa Application Processing

Under Development

Data Sources

	Data	Source
Page 1	All Arrivals Into New Zealand - Key Metrics	Immigration New Zealand
	Port of embarkation before New Zealand	Immigration New Zealand
	Incoming passenger numbers and airline allocation	Immigration New Zealand
	Arrivals into New Zealand by Type	Immigration New Zealand
	Managed Isolation Exemptions - Key Metrics	Managed Isolation and Quarantine
	Managed Isolation Exemptions Made and Approved	Managed Isolation and Quarantine
	Maritime Arrivals in the next 10 days	New Zealand Customs Service
	People in Managed Isolation and Capacity	Managed Isolation and Quarantine
	Regional Isolation and Quarantine (RIQ) details	Managed Isolation and Quarantine
	Page 2	Cases and Tests - Key Metrics
COVID-19 Swabs Taken in MIQ		Ministry of Health & NCTS
MIQ Contacts Received - Key Metrics		Managed Isolation and Quarantine
MIQ Type of Contact Received		Managed Isolation and Quarantine
MIQ Reason for Contact		Managed Isolation and Quarantine
MIQ and RIQ Operational Staff		Managed Isolation and Quarantine
Application Processing - Key Metrics		Under Development
Critical Visas Approved by Type		Under Development
Expressions of Interest Approved		Under Development