



BRIEFING

Large group arrivals in early 2021

Date:	2 December 2020	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-1657

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	<p>Note there is significant pressure on our MIQ capacity in early 2021, and a number of large groups have requested to come through MIQ in this period</p> <p>Note that Cabinet agreed to a workforce class exception for deep-sea fishing crew members, and the second tranche needs to be given a confirmed arrival date as soon as possible</p> <p>Note that the MBIE MIQ and the Ministry of Health recommended date for the second tranche arrival is 6 January</p> <p>Agree that the arrival date for the second tranche is 6 January and that this is confirmed with the fishing companies</p>	4 December 2020

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Privacy of natural persons	Principal Advisor – Head of MIQ	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Andrew Milne	Associate Deputy Chief Executive – MIQ		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
N/A

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 Withdrawn |



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Purpose

The purpose of this Briefing is to provide an overview of incoming large groups into Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) in January and February 2021 and to seek your agreement to the arrival date for the second tranche of international fishers. It also provides a summary of wider demands from groups for entry into MIQ, which are currently not accounted for but will be considered by Ministers shortly.

Recommended actions

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

- a **Note** there is significant pressure on our MIQ capacity in early 2021;
Noted
- b **Note** that three large groups are approved to arrive in January (second tranche of international fishers, United States Antarctica Programme and Recognised Seasonal Employees);
Noted
- c **Note** there are a number of other large groups who have requested to come through MIQ in January and February, and that further advice on these groups and our recommendations will be provided to you on Friday;
Noted
- d **Note** that on 21 September 2020, Cabinet agreed to a workforce class exception for up to 570 deep-sea fishing crew members, and the second tranche needs to be given a confirmed arrival date as soon as possible;
Noted
- e **Note** that the MBIE MIQ and Ministry of Health recommended date for the second tranche arrival is 6 January;
Noted
- f **Note** that officials need to begin working with the fishing companies on arranging the second tranche as soon as possible;
Noted
- g **Note** that there is legal risk from further delay of allowing the second tranche into MIQ;
Noted

h **Agree** that the arrival date for the second tranche is 6 January and that this is confirmed with the fishing companies.

Agree Disagree



Andrew Milne
Associate Deputy Chief Executive (MIQ)
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

02 / 12 / 2020



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

2 / 12 / 20

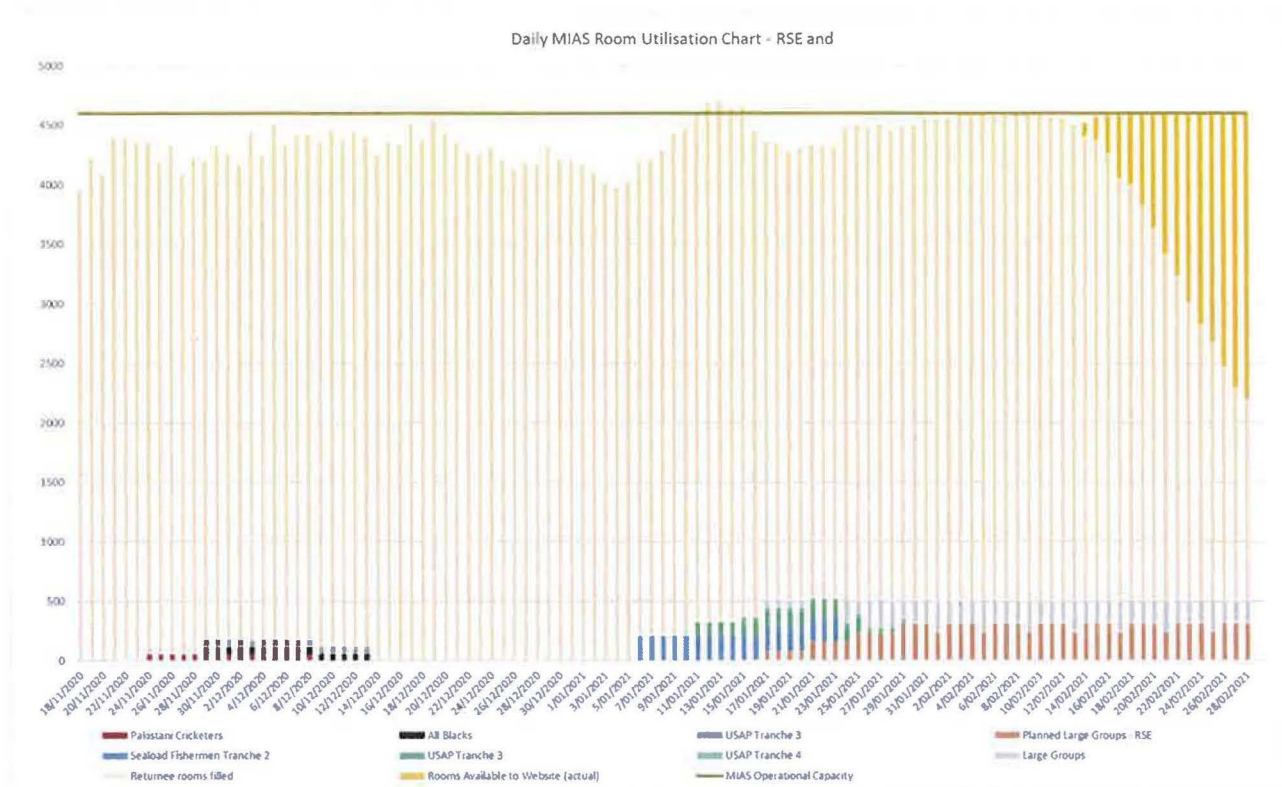
Background

MIQ for large groups

1. Currently, all international arrivals must undergo 14 days' managed isolation at a government controlled facility.
2. MIQ is a constraint on the number of large groups who can arrive into the country. There are time and cost considerations for each large group going through MIQ, and this needs to be managed alongside continued high demand for places in MIQ from returning New Zealanders who have a legal right to enter New Zealand within a reasonable timeframe.
3. As outlined to your Office on 20 November, MBIE MIQ had temporarily held back 500 rooms per fortnight from 17 January to ensure space was available for large groups subject to Ministerial decisions.

Large group demand and arrivals – January and February 2021

4. There is significant demand by large groups on MIQ facilities in early 2021.
5. Many of the spaces for large groups in mid-late January have already allocated to the second tranche of international mariners, the United States Antarctica Programme and the RSE workers.
6. The below graph details the confirmed large group arrivals for January and February, and outlines the remaining space not yet allocated.



7. In **Appendix 1** we have included a table which outlines those large groups who are confirmed and those groups which we are aware of wanting to enter but are yet to get approval. This also includes the details for each situation and relate to January and February only.

Confirmed groups

8. There are three large groups who have been approved entry into New Zealand and where MIAS vouchers have been provisionally allocated:
 - a. *RSE Workers* – Cabinet approved 2,000 workers to enter MIQ from mid-January through to March 2021.
 - b. *International mariners (tranche 2)* – Cabinet approved 570 fishers to enter MIQ. Tranche 1 arrived on 16 October 2020, with the second tranche originally due to arrive shortly after. We have tentatively scheduled the remaining 207 to arrive on 6 January.
 - c. *United States Antarctica Programme* – a further 115 are due to arrive on January 11 and 40 on January 15.
9. When factoring in the arrival of these three groups, there are rooms within the 500 which have been held back remaining. However, due to the complex and high-needs nature of managing these groups we do not believe we can safely manage any additional large groups with complex or bespoke requirements during the period these groups are in our facilities.
10. During peak periods for MIQ, staff will be working at capacity. Complex and large groups require additional support (e.g. training for sports, increased testing, translators, and additional welfare), which puts additional strain on the system that in turn, increases risk.

Approved but no date confirmed

11. We are also aware that the Refugees Quota is being re-started and we are working with Immigration NZ about how we manage this, especially during the high demand period. We are looking at how we could make dates work from February to March 2021.

Groups awaiting Ministerial decisions

12. There are additional large groups seeking approval to enter MIQ through the January and February period. These are outlined in the attached table. Advice around whether these groups can be accommodated in MIQ will be provided to you prior to the Class Exemption Ministerial meeting, which is likely to be next week.

Second tranche of international mariners

Background

13. On 21 September 2020, Cabinet agreed to a workforce class exception for up to 570 deep-sea fishing crew members (international mariners or mariners), as a one-off entry, to work on identified fishing ships in New Zealand for up to six months [CAB-20-MIN-0453].
14. On 20 October, 18 mariners tested positive for COVID-19 after day three testing. Over the coming days, another 13 mariners tested positive.
15. A lessons-learned review was commissioned on 10 November to inform decision-making about the second tranche. The review was also expected to be relevant for other large groups moving through managed isolation and quarantine.
16. The draft report was received by MBIE MIQ and MOH on 30 November, and is currently being reviewed by the appropriate agencies before it is finalised.

17. The draft recommendations, which have been accepted by both agencies, have been provided to your Office. Work is already underway to respond to these well in advance of their arrival.

Confirming date of arrival for tranche 2

18. The second cohort of Russian and Ukrainian fishermen (207 persons) was due to arrive in country sometime during the week of 9-16 November. However, due to the significant number of positive cases in the first tranche, their arrival has been delayed.
19. Both MOH and MBIE MIQ recommend that the arrival date be **6 January**. This ensures the necessary workforce is in place to manage this group through MIQ and be in a position to respond if any incidents were to arise.
20. Significant planning is required by all parties to ensure the second tranche complete their MIQ stay with minimal risk.
21. We need to confirm an arrival date with the fishing companies to ensure we can gather the necessary information about the second tranche of fishers. This is vital information to ensure we can complete the detailed operational planning well in advance of their arrival and there is a risk that they will lose their workforce to other opportunities in Russia. The fishermen will be arriving by charter flight and will self-isolate for 14 days prior to departure.
22. The second tranche also needs to arrive as soon as possible as they have been unable to undertake their fishing operations to date. The delay is having significant financial implications for the companies concerned.
23. Any decision to not grant landing permission or further delay to the charter flight could be challenged by way of judicial review. This could involve arguments about whether the Government's communications with the companies concerned have created a legitimate expectation that the next tranche of fishermen would be granted landing permission and places in managed isolation and quarantine facilities; about whether the decision took account of all relevant considerations and ignored irrelevant considerations; and about the reasonableness of the Government decisions.

Next steps

24. Further advice will be provided to you next week about the process for managing all requests for MIQ for large groups and how any decisions on who is permitted entry, is approved.
25. Officials will also begin working with the fishing companies as soon as we can communicate the date of arrival.

Annexes

Annex One: MIQ Group Arrivals – forward planning

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Large Group	People travelling	Date of arrival	Additional support needed	Status
RSE workers	2,000	Mid-January until March	Yes	Approved
International Mariners	207	6 January	Yes	Approved
United States Antarctica Programme	155	11 January (115 pers) 15 January (40 pers)	No	Approved
Refugee Quota	70 at a time	Currently discussing with INZ – likely to be between February and March	Yes	Approved
Australian Women's Netball Team	30	Late January / early February	Yes	Not approved
Toyota Racing Series	50	Late January	No	Not approved
Cargo crew servicing the Pacific	200 in total	First 100 in January	No	Not approved
Secondary school teachers	100	February	No	Not approved
Men's cricket teams	100 in total	In groups of 30-40 from late January to March (England / Australia and Bangladesh)	Yes	Not approved
Tourism NZ project	20	February	Yes	Not approved
<i>Other groups we are aware of needing to come through MIQ facilities shortly</i>				
Indian Charters	TBC – however we could manage incoming numbers	From February onwards	TBC – working with MOH to determine any additional requirements	-
Samoa Repatriation	150	From February	No	-