



BRIEFING

Proposed managed isolation accommodation and training arrangements for sports groups in early 2021

Date:	18 December 2020	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-1890

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Note the proposed MIQ sequence, and training allowances, for the five sports teams	21 December 2020
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Agree to allocate MIQ space and add these teams to the list of Government-approved Major Events Forward this briefing to the other members of the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions (for decision) and Minister for Sport and Recreation (for information)	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Ruth Isaac	General Manager, Employment, Skills & Immigration Policy	Privacy of natural persons	
Privacy of natural persons	Policy Manager, Allocation & Supply, MIQ Policy		✓
	Senior Policy Advisor, Immigration Policy		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Sport New Zealand; Ministry of Health

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 Withdrawn |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

Finalisation of MIQ bespoke group accommodation for early 2021

Date:	18 December 2020	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-1890

Purpose

This briefing provides advice on a revised sequencing of five sports teams through Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) in early 2021, and seeks your agreement to forward this briefing to members of the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions to confirm their addition to the major events list.

Recommended action

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

- a **Note** that on 16 December 2020 the Cabinet Business Committee considered a package of border exceptions, and delegated final decisions on two exceptions (covering five sports teams) to the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions to enable further advice to be taken [CBC-20-MIN-0141 refers] *Noted*
- b **Note** that due to pressures on MIQ capacity from a range of class exemptions, MIQ is not able to accommodate all these teams on their desired arrival dates or training schedules *Noted*
- c **Note** that MIBE officials have worked with Sport New Zealand to develop a proposed sequence of arrivals that best meets the requests of the sports teams within MIQ capacity and operational constraints *Noted*
- d **Note** that to accommodate this sequence of arrivals, some teams will need to be offered a combination of in-room and off-site training, rather than a full off-site training regime *Noted*
- e **Note** that while the series of bespoke MIQ arrangements can be accommodated by Canterbury District Health Board and the Public Health Unit if compromises are reached with the Codes, it will place considerable pressure on their already strained workforce *Noted*
- f **Agree** to add the Constellation Cup and 'Summer of Cricket' series to the list of Government-approved Major Events on the basis of the proposed arrival sequence for the five sports teams included in those two events Agree / Disagree
- g **Agree** to forward this briefing to the other Ministers on the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions to confirm these decisions Agree / Disagree

h **Note** that the Minister of Immigration will be briefed separately to make changes to Immigration Instructions to add these teams to the major events list for border exceptions

Noted

i **Note** that the Minister for COVID-19 Response will need to approve the final order permitting a variation from standard MIQ requirements to enable each team to train during the MIQ stay

Noted

j **Agree** to MIQ officials allocating space in MIQ for the five sports teams as set out in the proposed arrival sequence

Agree **Disagree**

k **Agree** to forward this briefing to the Minister for Sport and Recreation for his information

Agree **Disagree**

Privacy of natural persons

Policy Manager, Allocation & Supply
MIQ Policy, MBIE

18, 12, 2020
..... / /

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

Privacy of natural persons

Manager, Immigration Policy – Border and Funding
Employment, Skills & Immigration Policy
Branch, MBIE

18, 12, 2020
..... / /



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

18 / 12 / 2020
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Background

1. On 11 December 2020 the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions considered a package of proposed class exceptions and MIQ allocations for early 2021, including how these group arrivals could be sequenced through managed isolation, to minimise MIQ resourcing impacts and displacement effects for returning New Zealanders and other critical workers [briefing 2021-1794 refers].
2. Included in this group was a series of sports teams, for the Constellation Cup (netball), the 'Summer of cricket', and Toyota Racing series (which has subsequently withdrawn its application), which were proposed to be included on the major events list and would require bespoke MIQ arrangements to facilitate their training prior to competing at an international level.
3. Officials advised that, owing to pressures on MIQ capacity created by both the high number of bookings and other class exception groups (particularly the arrival of RSE workers in early 2021 and tranche two of the Russian and Ukrainian mariners), it was not possible to accommodate all these groups and provide bespoke MIQ training arrangements on their preferred arrival dates. Options were proposed to stagger or prioritise their arrival.
4. Following the 11 December meeting of the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions, the proposed exceptions were considered by the Cabinet Business Committee (CBC). Further advice was sought on how these groups could be sequenced through MIQ in a way that enabled all five teams to enter MIQ in an acceptable timeframe.
5. Given the need for urgent decisions, CBC delegated final decisions on the addition of these five teams to the major events list, and their sequencing through MIQ, to the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions [CBC-20-MIN-0141 refers]. Potential solutions were canvassed further with the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister of Immigration on 17 December 2020.
6. This paper proposes a revised sequence to best accommodate these teams, and seeks Ministers' final agreement to this allocation and adding them to the major events list.

Discussion

Exceptions and timeframes sought

7. Sports New Zealand have sought approval for four international cricket teams to travel to New Zealand for the 'Summer of cricket' event. These teams are:
 - a. The English women's cricket team, 28 members, seeking to arrive on 31 January 2021;
 - b. The Australian women's cricket team, 29 members, seeking to arrive on 7 February 2021;
 - c. The Australian men's cricket team, 35 members, seeking to arrive on 7 February 2021;
 - d. The Bangladeshi men's cricket team, 35 members, seeking to arrive on 24 February and 10 March 2021.
8. Sports New Zealand have also sought approval to enable the Australian netball team to travel to New Zealand to compete in the Constellation Cup, being 30 team members seeking to arrive on 20 January 2021.

9. Ministers have previously agreed in principle that it would be appropriate to add the 'Summer of Cricket' series and Constellation Cup to the Government-approved Major Events list, to enable the five teams to travel to New Zealand to participate in these events, subject to appropriate MIQ arrangements being agreed.

Proposed sequencing through managed isolation

10. Officials have continued to work with Sport New Zealand to find an arrival sequence that will permit all five teams to travel to New Zealand in a way that meets the needs of the sports teams, and fits within the MIQ system's capacity.
11. We consider it is possible to accommodate these teams, as closely as practical to their proposed arrival dates, on the following schedule in Table 1. We note, however, this option will still place considerable strain on MIQ operational resourcing and staff given the short planning time-horizon, the current focus on other class exception arrivals in January, and MIQ operating at 'full' capacity.

Sport team	Proposed entry date
Cricket (English women's team)	26 January (requested 31 January)
Cricket (Australian men's team)	7 February (as requested)
Netball (Australian Diamonds)	15 February (20 January requested)
Cricket (Bangladesh men's team)	24 February (as requested)
Cricket (Australian women's team)	13 March (requested 7 February)

Table 1: Proposed entry dates

12. This sequence, along with the training time that would be permitted for each team under this proposal, is set out fully at Annex One.
13. To facilitate this arrival sequence, a degree of overlap between teams is required. Given that MIQ can only accommodate one sports team training off-site at a time this will mean some teams will have to temporarily train in-room only.¹ MIQ can provide sports equipment in rooms, such as rowing machines, which we have done for some teams previously. Annex One sets out the proposed training programme for each team.

Operationalising these proposals

14. As other large, high-needs, groups are being accommodated in Auckland over this period (RSE workers in particular), all the sports teams will need to carry out their MIQ stay in Christchurch facilities. The sequence of multiple and overlapping sports teams, immediately following another high risk group also being accommodated in Christchurch, will place considerable demands on Christchurch MIQ operations and Canterbury District Health Board and Public Health Unit.
15. MIQ Operations and Canterbury Regional District Health Board have been consulted on the proposals in this paper, and while they confirm they can accommodate the proposed sequence if training compromises are reached with the Codes, they note these requests will put increased pressure on an already fatigued workforce.

¹ MIQ officials are also investigating whether limited outdoor individual training options can be safely made available, although the high pressure on Christchurch MIQ capacity over this time will limit options that can be made available, or may mean that other MIQ users' access to outdoor facilities are limited at times to facilitate this (which would raise equity and BORA issues).

16. As has been the expectation for previous training provision for sports teams, the sports team (or sponsoring New Zealand organisations) will be required to procure and contract the appropriate training facilities for the teams to use while in MIQ, subject to approval by MIQ, the local RIQ and DHB. To successfully offer the fullest possible range of training to these teams it is essential that this is carried out and all necessary confirmations are provided to MIQ operations urgently.
17. Also consistent with previous MIQ training arrangements for other sports teams, the teams will be required to meet a range of requirements and conditions to ensure the training arrangements do not compromise the public health measures. This includes the requirement for team members to meet low risk indicators, a returning a negative day 3 test (which would usually be available on day 4, but can be subject to other urgent pressures on local testing capacity), and more extensive measures (including locking down the whole team) should a team member test positive.

Sports New Zealand – Comment

18. There is no option where there is no overlap between netball and cricket due to the fixed dates for the men's cricket (due to international scheduling pressure). Both Codes were presented with two options: Early arrival for netball overlapping with the incoming England Women's Cricket team or later arrival overlapping with the end of the Australian Men's Cricket team. Netball New Zealand advised that the early arrival option was too soon to allow for the necessary arrangements to be made. New Zealand Cricket advised that they could not compromise the Australian Men's training schedule, but were prepared to push back the dates for the Bangladeshi Men to access the offsite training.
19. Due to staffing constraints, MIQ operations advised that two training venues could not operate at the same time. This means that for periods of two teams overlapping, they will need to reach an agreement around how to divide access to a training environment. For the team not able to access the training environment, access to suitable facilities at the MIQ will be essential. This will include space to run, throw and access to gym equipment. Netball New Zealand advise that Netball Australia are sceptical about the nature of the training environment, and that this might lead them to decide not to proceed.

Costs

20. On 16 December the Cabinet Business Committee (with power to act) agreed changes to the MIQ fees regime, to take effect from 1 January [CBC-20-MIN-0136 refers]. These new fees - \$4,800 plus GST per person, will be applied to these sports teams.
21. Separately, officials have briefed the Minister for COVID-19 Response proposals to introduce a mixed charging model for groups requiring MIQ services that are over and above standard MIQ services [briefing 2021-1598 refers]. The proposal would enable MBIE to recover the costs of providing the "additional" services.
22. The groups requiring bespoke MIQ arrangements would be charged:
 - a. The applicable MIQ fee per person (e.g. for critical workers) under the MIQ Fees Regulations
 - b. The actual costs for providing additional services that could include, but not be limited to, access to training facilities and additional transport, security and cleaning.
23. The staffing costs for engagement and planning around the provision of bespoke MIQ arrangements would continue to be covered by the MIQ baseline.
24. If the Minister for COVID-19 Response and the Minister of Finance agree to the recommendations in that paper then the proposed cost recovery approach would apply to these sports teams. Considered together, recent figures suggest that bespoke MIQ costs,

while differing depending on need, will likely to result in these teams being charged approximately \$10,000 + GST per person.

Next steps

25. If you agree these final groups, we recommend you forward this paper to the members of the Ministerial Group on Border Exceptions, to agree the addition of the 'Summer of Cricket' and Constellation Cup to the major events list to enable the five sports teams to travel to New Zealand.
26. We also recommend you forward this briefing to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, for his information.
27. If the full Ministerial Group agree, officials will prepare communications material and immigration instructions for the Minister of Immigration to sign to implement the agreed exceptions.
28. If agreed, the Minister for COVID-19 Response will need to make orders under the COVID-19 Response Act 2019 to authorise the variation from standard MIQ arrangements for each team, and setting out the precise conditions of those bespoke arrangements.

