



BRIEFING

Urgent MIQ group allocation proposals

Date:	26 February 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-2573

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Discuss the group allocation proposals in this paper with Border Exceptions Ministers Group	1 March 2021
	Agree the group allocation proposals	
	Agree the changes to the maritime MIQ allocation	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)				
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact	
Privacy of natural persons	Manager, MIQ Allocation and Supply	Privacy of natural persons		✓
	Senior Advisor, MIQ Allocation and Supply			

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Immigration policy, New Zealand Space Agency, MFAT

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments



BRIEFING

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Purpose

To seek your agreement to three group allocation proposals for managed isolation rooms that require urgent consideration, and to a change in the scope of the maritime allocation to ensure we protect the Pacific from Covid-19.

Recommended action

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

- a **Note** there is sufficient space in the 400 managed isolation rooms set aside per fortnight for group arrivals to facilitate the urgent group allocation requests noted below

Noted

Rocket Lab

- b **Note** Rocket Lab has applied for an emergency allocation of 14 MIQ places at the beginning of May to enable a rocket launch in late May, but they do not currently meet emergency allocation criteria, which requires travel within 7 days of approval (14 days from 1 March).

Noted

- c **Note** officials consider manual allocation through the groups process to be the appropriate mechanism of assigning spaces for Rocket Lab.

Noted

- d International relations and Commercial information

Noted

- e **Agree**, in consultation with Border Exceptions Ministers, that up to 14 rooms from the groups allocation be allocated to Rocket Labs for entry in early May.

Agree/Disagree

Olympics qualifying events

- f **Note** a number of New Zealand Olympians need to leave shortly and re-enter New Zealand in the lead up to the Olympics to compete in qualifying events.

Noted

- g **Note** without being manually allocated places in MIQ, these Olympians will not be able to compete in their qualifying events; while some MIAS vouchers have yet to be released for April, demand is such that we expect them to be booked as soon as they are released online.

Noted

- h **Note** officials have not had sufficient time to consider the merits of this proposal and have been directed by the office of the Minister for Covid-19 to include it in this briefing for urgent consideration.

Noted

- i **Agree**, in consultation with the Border Exceptions Ministers, that up to 41 rooms from the groups allocation be assigned to the list of Olympians attached at Annex 1 for pre-Olympics travel between 29 March and 25 April.

Agree/Disagree

Cargo crew servicing the Pacific

- j **Note** in December Border Exceptions Ministers agreed a new class exception for replacement cargo crew servicing the Pacific, to be implemented from 1 February 2021.

Noted

- k **Note** Ministers intended for these mariners to secure MIQ places through MIAS, but owing to high demand, this has not been possible and will likely remain challenging throughout 2021.

Noted

- l **Note** there will be a negative impact on the Pacific if crew are unable to complete the full 14 days of managed isolation prior to departure, including an increased risk of COVID-19 being transmitted to the Pacific.

Noted

- m **Note** MIQ has 60 rooms set aside for short-stay maritime arrivals to facilitate international cargo crew transfers.

Noted

- n **Agree** to reallocate a small number of short-stay maritime rooms to long-stay rooms to facilitate the entry of 15-16 mariners per month.

Agree/Disagree

Privacy of natural persons



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Manager, Allocation and Supply
MIQ Policy, MBIE

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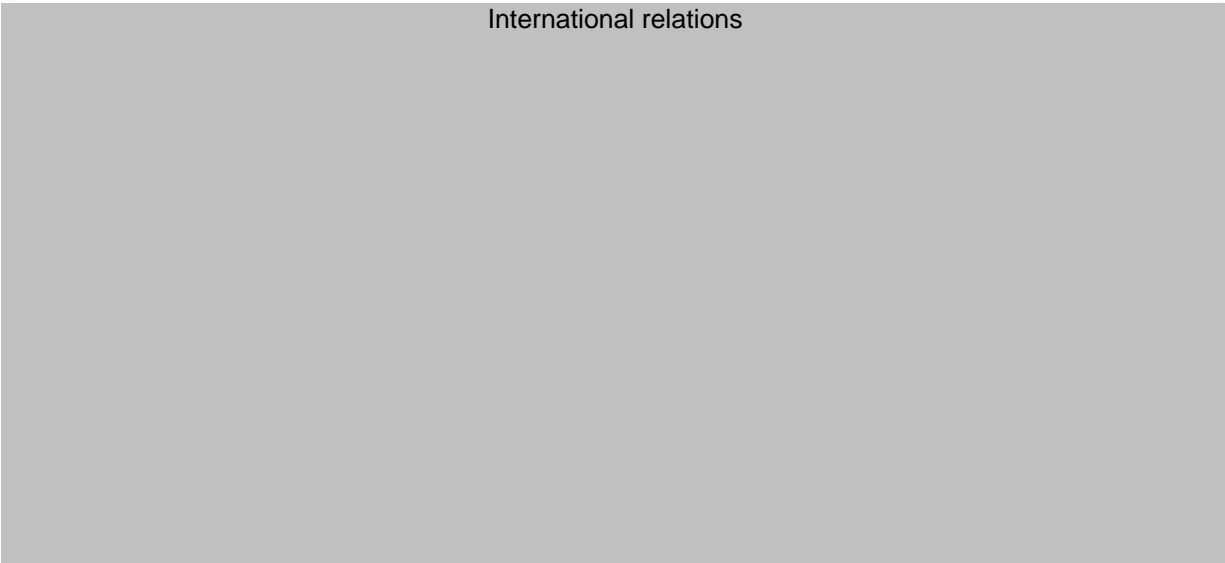
Background

1. You recently agreed to a new group allocations process for dealing with groups that did not require a class exception to enter New Zealand but for whom it was not practical to book through MIAS [briefing 2021-1728 refers]. Border Exceptions Ministers will generally now consider these requests at their regular meetings.
2. Border Exceptions Ministers are scheduled to meet for the first time in 2021 the week of 8 March, however a number of group proposals are sufficiently urgent that a decision is required before this meeting.

Group proposals requiring urgent consideration

3. To facilitate the arrival of groups into MIQ and ministerial decision-making, 400 rooms are set aside for group arrivals each fortnight. These rooms are fully allocated until late March 2021 after which they are largely unallocated except for a small group of refugees (70) scheduled to arrive in May. As such, there is sufficient room in the group arrivals allocation to approve the three urgent proposals noted below.

Rocket Lab

4. Rocket Lab provides commercial launch services. They require a launch licence from the Minister for Economic and Regional Development, and individual satellites they launch require a payload permit. As such, Rocket Lab launches are approved by the New Zealand Government. Rocket Lab and their satellite launch customers need to regularly bring specialist teams into the country for its rocket launches. Staff of the satellite customers have been granted border exceptions as 'other critical workers' but are struggling to secure MIAS vouchers for the dates they need.
5. 

International relations
- 6.
- 7.
8. Rocket Lab have applied for emergency MIQ allocations under category 2d 'travel required for national security, interest or law enforcement reasons', however the application is not eligible under current criteria which require travel within 7 days of approval (rising to 14 days from 1 March).
9. For this reason, we recommend that Ministers consider assigning Rocket Lab space from the group allocation. There are sufficient group spaces available at the time Rocket Lab have requested spaces.

10. If Rocket Lab is not successful in securing a launch permit, these spaces will be released back onto MIAS for the general public.

Olympics qualifying events

11. In preparation for the Tokyo Summer Olympics, a number of New Zealand athletes need to leave New Zealand for qualifying events and essential preparation.
12. The Tokyo Summer Olympics have been identified as a key sporting priority for New Zealand and the government has invested in the Olympics and Paralympics campaign.
13. Because of MIQ pressures, spaces on MIAS are booked as soon as they are released, making it very difficult for athletes who need to return to New Zealand on specific dates. Without an assured way of getting back into the country, Sport New Zealand is not comfortable sending their athletes abroad for qualifying events. The first athletes need to leave New Zealand urgently for qualifying events in early March.
14. The Senior Officials Group for Border Exceptions has not had sufficient time to consider the merits of this proposal, as we have only recently been made aware of it. Officials have been directed by the office of the Minister for Covid-19 to include this proposal in this briefing for urgent consideration.

The 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup proposal is being addressed separately

15. Rugby New Zealand has also requested an urgent decision on Ministers' support for the 2021 Women's Rugby World Cup, including bespoke MIQ arrangements to facilitate training.
16. Separate advice is being prepared on this proposal due to its size and scope.

Other group demands in April/May

17. There is one other confirmed group entering in the April/May period, the next cohort of 70 refugees for the refugee resettlement programme.
18. In addition, there is the potential for requests from:
 - National security or defence
 - The horticulture sector, for additional RSE workers.
19. These groups have not yet applied through the group allocation process, but are listed for completeness to give you an overview of all anticipated demands in this period.

Change to maritime allocations

Replacement cargo crew servicing the Pacific

20. New Zealand is obliged to facilitate maritime crew transfers under the Maritime Labour Convention. In addition, New Zealand has special responsibilities towards the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau as part of the Realm of New Zealand.
21. In setting New Zealand's border strategy, Cabinet agreed that the strategy must mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission into the Pacific [CAB-MIN-20-0821 refers]. To help protect the Pacific against COVID-19, Ministers agreed to allow cargo crew servicing the Pacific to undergo 14 days isolation in our MIQ facilities before boarding their vessels. This category is capped at 200 people per year.

22. Shipping agents are expected to secure places on MIAS for their crew. However, due to high demand for MIAS vouchers, and logistics difficulties encountered by industry, this has proved very difficult. Because of the difficulty in securing MIAS vouchers, some cargo crew servicing the Pacific were housed in the short-stay maritime rooms on a one-off basis to facilitate their crew change, help reduce the risk of transmission and avoid significant disruptions to Pacific supply routes.
23. MIQ has an existing 'maritime' allocation for mariners who need to isolate for a short time before joining their vessels. This allocation is not currently oversubscribed, with the highest one-night usage 53 rooms out of an allocation of 60.
24. Officials propose reallocating a number of the short-stay maritime rooms to long-stay rooms to facilitate the MIQ of replacement cargo crew servicing the Pacific region. Approximately 8 rooms would change to long-stay to facilitate 15-16 mariners per month.
25. Officials will continue to review the use and size of the maritime allocation to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Next steps

26. We recommend you urgently discuss the three group allocation proposals with your colleagues on the Border Exceptions Ministers Group in order to confirm final decisions. You may also wish to discuss the proposed changes to the maritime allocation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Annexes

Annex One: List of Olympians needing to enter MIQ in March and April

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Privacy of natural persons

