



BRIEFING

Letter to Ministers about new group allocation process

Date:	8 March 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-2674

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Discuss the attached letter with your Border Exceptions Ministerial Group colleagues Sign and forward the attached letter to all relevant portfolio Ministers	12 March 2021
Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration	Discuss the attached letter with your Border Exceptions Ministerial Group colleagues Sign and forward the attached letter to all relevant portfolio Ministers	12 March 2021

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

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

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 Withdrawn |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

Letter to Ministers about new group allocation process

Date:	5 March 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-2674

Purpose

To seek your approval for a letter to your colleagues setting out the new process and your expectations for group requests for MIQ allocation and support.

Recommended action

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

- a **Note** in February the Minister for COVID-19 Response agreed a new process for deciding group allocation requests [2021-1728 refers].

Noted

- b **Note** you also requested a letter be sent from you both to your Ministerial colleagues informing them of the new process and your expectations for proposals

Noted

- c **Note** officials have provided a draft letter for your consideration in this briefing.

Noted

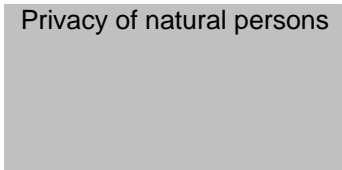
- d **Note** you may wish to discuss this the content of this letter with the other members of the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group.

Noted

- e **Agree** to circulate the letter at Annex One to relevant portfolio Ministers in advance of the next Border Exceptions Ministerial Group, which is scheduled to occur on 17 March.

Agree / Disagree

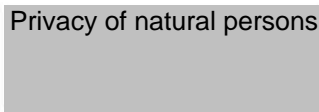
Privacy of natural persons



**Manager, Allocation and Supply
MIQ Policy, MBIE**

D. S. 2021
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Privacy of natural persons



**Manager, Immigration Border and
Funding Policy**

Labour, Skills and Enterprise, MBIE

8.3.2021
..... / /

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

..... / /

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration

..... / /

Issue

1. You discussed and agreed to a new process for assessing group allocation requests for MIQ space and support in February [2021-1728 refers]. This process clarifies that the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group will make decisions on group allocations as well as class exceptions.
2. Officials have drafted a letter outlining the new process for you to circulate to your Ministerial colleagues in advance of the next Border Exceptions Ministerial Group, currently scheduled for 17 March.
3. You may wish to discuss this letter with the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group before circulating it to your other colleagues.
4. Officials will communicate the new process in more detail to agencies (attached at Annex Two), as well as proactively engaging agencies where we are aware of upcoming group allocation requests.

Next steps

5. Discuss the letter at Annex One with the members of the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group
6. Circulate the letter at Annex One to all relevant portfolio Ministers.

Annexes

Annex One: Letter setting out group allocations process

Annex Two: Communications to agencies

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



25 March 2021

Dear Ministers

We are writing to you as the Minister with responsibility for the COVID-19 response and the chair of the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group. As you will all be aware, MIQ is facing significant pressures due to strong demand for space from returning New Zealanders as well as from critical workers. Given the limited number of spaces available online to book in managed isolation, MIQ is receiving an increasingly large number of requests for the manual allocation of vouchers to groups and individuals, including both New Zealanders and those holding relevant visas. To manage these requests, we have approved a new process for evaluating and prioritising proposals for group arrivals into MIQ.

We have agreed to expand the remit of the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group to include decisions on which groups requesting entry into New Zealand are manually allocated vouchers. The Border Exceptions Ministerial Group was established to consider requests for border exceptions from workforces and other groups of visa holders who did not meet current border exception criteria, when there was a clear case supporting their entry to New Zealand for economic, social or cultural reasons. In making decisions for group exceptions, we are required to give practical consideration to MIQ total capacity, MIQ timing, MIQ facility requirements and public health risk (CAB-20-MIN-0435 refers).

Being responsible for the manual allocation of vouchers to groups not requiring border exceptions will provide us with more visibility of the pipeline of demand for spaces in managed isolation. It will allow us to more easily prioritise requests and align decisions on border exceptions and the allocation of space in MIQ. Any proposals for group allocations will require approval from the relevant portfolio Minister. If you would like to put forward a proposal for this process, we would like to reiterate that:

- **There is a high bar for approval:** manually allocating rooms to groups reduces the number of rooms available for New Zealanders and other critical workers to use and therefore should only be done when it will result in significant public benefits.
- **We wish to remind Ministers to only refer requests within their portfolios that they deem to be the highest priority:** given the small number of rooms available for group allocations, we would like to remind Ministers to prioritise requests within their respective portfolios before taking a proposal to the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group. Not all groups will be able to be accommodated.
- **Supporting implementation:** If proposals are approved, agencies are expected to provide sufficient support to MBIE, especially when there are requests for bespoke requirements. These groups can often be high-needs and require considerable support from MIQ staff to ensure they are safely accommodated.

We appreciate your consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', located below the 'Yours sincerely' text.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration