



BRIEFING

Process for decommissioning managed isolation and quarantine facilities

Date:	17 June 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-3907

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Agree to the key objectives of the managed isolation and quarantine decommissioning process.	24 June 2021

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Kara Isaac	General Manager, MIQ Policy	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Privacy of natural persons	Senior Policy Advisor		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
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 Withdrawn |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



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Purpose

The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with an overview of the process for decommissioning a managed isolation and quarantine facility (MIQF) and seek your agreement to the key objectives of the decommissioning process.

Recommended action

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

- a **Agree** the key objectives of the decommissioning process will be:
- supporting affected staff
 - minimising the operational impact on the MIQF
 - supporting the hotel to transition back to the commercial environment
 - timely and clear communication to all stakeholders and agency partners.

Agree / Disagree / Discuss

- b **Note** the high level MIQF decommissioning process, including your potential involvement

Noted

Proactive release

- c **Agree** that this briefing is proactively released with any appropriate withholdings under the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree

Kara Isaac
General Manager, MIQ Policy
MBIE

17/ 06 / 2021

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

21 / 06 / 2021
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Background

1. You have asked for advice on the process for decommissioning a managed isolation and quarantine facility (MIQF).
2. To date, no general use MIQFs have been permanently decommissioned. The Ramada Auckland was used as a MIQ facility for '501' deportees, with its notice of contract termination issued in April 2021 [2021-2503 refers].
3. Officials have been working to develop the process to be followed after a decision is made to decommission a general use MIQF.

Objectives of the decommissioning process

4. It is proposed that the key objectives within the decommissioning process will be:
 - supporting affected staff
 - minimising the operational impact on the MIQF
 - supporting the hotel returning to the commercial environment
 - timely and clear communication to all stakeholders and agency partners.

Key stages of decommissioning process

5. The key stages of the decommissioning process are:
 - Minister for COVID-19 Response's decision to decommission a MIQF
 - decommissioning project team and plan established
 - decommissioning implementation plan provided to the Minister
 - notification of decision to facility, workforce, stakeholders and partner agencies
 - public communications of decision (Ministerial involvement optional)
 - notice of contract termination for individual MIQF
 - de-designation of MIQF once it is empty of returnees – MIQF is then cleaned, equipment returned and any required facility remediation undertaken (such as return of CCTV camera and removal of fencing)
 - MIQF returns to other use at the end of the contract period.
6. Throughout all these stages there will be ongoing engagement with the hotel, stakeholders and workforce.
7. The decommissioning process for each individual MIQF will take into account the structure of the workforce and their specific employment agreements. This will require engagement with those agencies that have staff involved in the operation of a MIQF. Across the MIQF network the following agencies are contributing staff: District Health Boards, NZ Defence Force, Police, MBIE, Aviation Security Service. Third party security contractors are also employed.
8. We anticipate the majority of staff will be redeployed back to their home agency, but in some cases there may be staff redundancies. The exact impact and required workforce support will be MIQF specific, and included within the decommissioning plan for each individual MIQF.

Upfront engagement and preparation

9. Prior to undertaking any decommissioning of individual MIQFs, officials will undertake upfront engagement with relevant stakeholders. This engagement will not be in the context of decommissioning an individual MIQF, but will ensure key relationships and planning are in place for when we initiate the process of decommissioning an individual MIQF.

Examples of this include:

- building strong connections with employer networks (such as the MIQ employer network and wider Government employment networks)
 - developing proactive strategies to retain the workforce in place until a MIQF is de-designated
 - exploring ways in which the hotels could be supported post their operation as a MIQF e.g. enabling the hotels to gain a formal accreditation (type to be confirmed) to show they are safe for regular usage after finished as a MIQF
 - learning from other jurisdictions' approaches to decommissioning MIQFs.
10. We are also currently drafting key communication information for future use, as there will be common areas of interest from the public across all facilities. The communication information will cover likely public interest questions (such as reassurance that the hotel will be safe to use and the process of decommissioning the MIQF) and communications to hotel owners and stakeholders for your use.

Process for decommissioning an individual MIQ facility

11. A high level overview of proposed process is provided in **Annex 1**. The elements of the process of decommissioning an individual MIQF will be:
- establishing a project team and project plan/terms of reference for the decommission – these will be specific for each facility, taking into account factors such as the stakeholders/workforce/iwi involved and the physical alterations that were made to the hotel for it to be a MIQF. Consideration will also be taken into account of impacts on wider infrastructure and workforce such as airport staff and Regional Isolation and Quarantine Command Centres
 - engagement with the hotel, workforce and stakeholders prior to the termination of the hotel's contract. This engagement will continue to run throughout the whole decommission process
 - notice of the termination of the hotel's contract. The decommissioning process depicted in Annex 1 uses the 90 day termination for convenience clause, which is the one we expect to mostly use. Other contract termination periods include an immediate termination clause (for example where the hotel is suddenly unable to operate as a MIQ facility and no remediation is possible) and a 30 day clause for other situations.
 - returnees are likely to continue to be allocated to the facility between 0-60 days after contract termination notice is issued.
 - once a facility is empty of returnees the facility will be de-designated, meaning the Health Orders applying to a MIQ facility cease to operate. A deep clean of the facility will also be undertaken once returnees are no longer in the facility

- between 60-90 days after contract termination equipment will be returned and any remediation of the hotel undertaken e.g. taking down CCTV cameras if they are being removed, removing fences etc.

Risk

12. The key risk within the decommissioning process is that the key stakeholders and workers feel they have not been properly involved or supported. This could also result in negative media reaction around the process. This will be mitigated through the upfront engagement with stakeholders and support for affected workers and the hotels throughout the decommissioning process.
13. There is also a risk that some workers, particularly those temporary staff or those on MIQ specific contracts, may start to look for other opportunities as soon as they know a facility is closing, potentially causing workforce shortages while there are still returnees in a facility. Mitigations of this risk will be considered as part of the further development of the decommissioning process.

Your involvement

14. We have indicated in Annex 1 the key parts of the decommissioning process where your involvement will or could occur. Optional areas for your involvement include making announcements of individual MIQFs closing and formally recognising hotel operators at the end of their contract period. We will work with your office around the scope and timing of your involvement when individual MIQFs are decommissioned.

Next steps

15. Officials will continue to develop the decommissioning process and will use the high level process in Annex 1 when advising about the specific decommissioning process of any future MIQFs. Specific advice would include tailored communication relevant to the MIQF, workforce impact, financial costs and decommission timelines.

Annexes

Annex One: High level MIQF decommissioning process (showing 90 day contract termination period).

**Annex 1: High Level MIQF Decommissioning Process
(showing 90 day contract termination process)**

MBIE governance oversight (and throughout the whole process)

