



AIDE MEMOIRE

Letter to Ministers regarding MIQ group allocations

Date:	4 June 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-4022

Information for Minister(s)

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Privacy of natural persons	Manager, Allocation and Supply	Privacy of natural persons	✓
	Senior Policy Advisor, Allocation and Supply		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

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Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Noted

Seen

See Minister's Notes

Declined

Needs change

Overtaken by Events

Withdrawn

Comments



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Purpose

To provide you with a draft letter to send to your Ministerial colleagues regarding changes to the group allocation criteria and process.

Privacy of natural persons

Manager, Allocation and Supply
MIQ Policy, MBIE

4 / 6 / 21

Context

1. On 28 May, you agreed to update the group allocation criteria and process to ensure it remains fit for purpose [briefing 2021-3770]. You requested officials draft a letter for you to send to other Ministers informing them of these changes and your decision not to consider group allocation requests made out of cycle.
2. A draft letter is attached at Annex One. We recommend you send it the members of the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group, the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Defence.
3. Agencies have a deadline of 11 June to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the upcoming 'packages' meeting. We suggest you circulate this letter as soon as you can to alert your colleagues before the EOI application period closes.

Annexes

Annex One: Draft letter

Annex One: Draft letter

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



Hon Grant Robertson
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Hon David Parker
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon Damien O'Connor
Minister for Primary Industries

Hon Peeni Henare
Minister of Defence

Dear Ministers

I write to inform you of changes to the way groups are allocated spaces in our managed isolation and quarantine facilities (MIQ) and the upcoming decision making process for group allocations.

Changes to the criteria for group allocations to MIQ

I have agreed to update the MIQ group allocation criteria to ensure it stays fit for purpose. Groups will continue to need a sponsoring agency and be aligned with a Government priority. They must need more than 20 rooms to be considered through this pathway, and arrive as a single unit unless there is no reasonable alternative. In addition, their entry into New Zealand or the reason they need to leave and return must be time sensitive. My expectation is that requests for a group allocation meet all of the criteria.

I must also reiterate my expectation that all other pathways to secure places within MIQ should be considered before group allocation requests are made. Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) vouchers are now available further in advance and changes to MIAS means it can offer increased flexibility to groups that do not have complex needs. Groups that could use MIAS but whose preferred dates of travel are not yet released will still be considered to have a viable alternative pathway and be deprioritised for group allocation consideration.

Going forward, group allocation decisions will be made in packages

There are limited spaces in MIQ and high demand for group entry. To help prioritise requests, I have agreed that going forward group allocation decisions for MIQ space will be considered in 'packages' that cover a five-month period. This approach provides a clear process and timeframe for agencies and ministers to submit proposals, and allows ministers to collectively consider, and make trade-offs between, different requests.

The Border Exceptions Ministerial Group will meet in early July to consider group allocation requests for groups arriving from November 2021 to March 2022. It is likely demand for MIQ will increase over the summer months, which means it's critical for us to make strategic choices about how to use space in MIQ. We have fewer spaces to assign than previously as

RSE workers and refugees have ongoing allocations that are currently taking up around 200 of the 400 group spaces each fortnight.

Proposals should be scaled and achievable

Due to the limited space in the group allocation, agencies need work to with groups before making requests to ensure all requests are scaled to the minimum viable number of entrants, and that the requests are achievable for the group and supporting agency.

I will not be considering any group allocation request before early July. Please work with your agencies to manage the expectations of groups in your portfolio areas.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Hipkins', written in a cursive style.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response