



BRIEFING

Additional MIQ access for the sports and cultural sectors

Date:	19 October 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-1389

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	<p>Refer this briefing to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.</p> <p>Agree to allow an out-of-cycle group allocation request for a sports and cultural MIQ allocation.</p> <p>Refer this briefing to the Border Exception Ministerial Group for consideration.</p>	26 October 2021
<p>Border Ministers</p> <p>Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration</p> <p>Hon Megan Woods Minister of Research, Science and Innovation</p> <p>Hon Carmel Sepuloni Minister of Social Development and Employment</p> <p>Hon Stuart Nash Minister for Economic and Regional Development</p> <p>Hon Willie Jackson Minister for Māori Development</p>	<p>Consider the establishment an ongoing allocation of 40 rooms per month for travel in the sports and cultural sectors to commence in December 2021.</p> <p>Note that the Border Exceptions Senior Officials Group do not consider this request to be a priority given current significant capacity constraints in MIQ and recommend that the primary MIQ focus for late 2021 be on supporting the current community outbreak, bringing in additional health workers, and supporting the arrival of Afghanistan evacuees.</p> <p>Note that establishing a sports and cultural MIQ allocation will directly result in the decrease of rooms available via MIAS for others with a legal right to enter New Zealand</p>	

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Privacy of natural persons	Policy Manager, MIQ Policy	Privacy of natural persons	✓
	Principal Advisor, MIQ Policy		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted:

Sport New Zealand, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Senior Officials Group for Border Exceptions (MBIE, MFAT, MPI, MSD).

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments



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Purpose

This briefing:

Minister for Covid-19 Response

- Seeks your agreement to allow an out-of-cycle MIQ group allocation request.

Border Ministers

- Asks you to consider establishing an ongoing allocation of 40 rooms per month to facilitate travel in the sports and cultural sectors to commence in December 2021.

Recommended action

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

- Note** that Sport New Zealand and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage state that there is demand for additional MIQ space for travel in the sports and cultural sectors, and are seeking a group allocation for this demand.

Noted
- Note** that a new group allocation for the sports and cultural sector will cause further strain on the MIQ system and will reduce the number of MIQ spaces available to other individuals seeking travel to New Zealand.

Noted
- Note** that a new group allocation for the sports and cultural sector may generate public criticism of MIQ group allocations as it would impact on access to MIAS vouchers for others during a time of very high demand.

Noted
- Note** that due to the rise in COVID-19 community cases entering MIQ, and the need to accommodate other priority groups, MIQ space would not be available for this allocation until December 2021.

Noted
- Note** there is no remaining space in the MIQ group allocation until March 2022 and any allocation established before then would therefore need to use rooms that would otherwise be released on MIAS.

Noted
- Note** that the Border Exceptions Senior Officials Group do not consider this request to be a priority given current significant capacity constraints in MIQ and recommend that the primary MIQ focus for late 2021 be on supporting the current community outbreak, bringing in additional health workers, and supporting the arrival of Afghanistan evacuees.

Noted

g **Agree** to refer this briefing to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.

Agree / Disagree

h **Agree** to allow an out-of-cycle group allocation request for an ongoing sports and culture allocation and to refer this briefing to Border Ministers for their consideration

Agree / Disagree

i **Note** that if this allocation is established, that rooms must be allocated six weeks prior to travel or they will be released on MIAS for general booking, consistent with the group allocation policy.

Noted

Border Ministers

j **Consider** the establishment of an ongoing MIQ allocation for travel in the sports and cultural sectors of 40 rooms per month commencing in December 2021.

Agree to establishment / Disagree with establishment

h **Note** that if an allocation is established then Sport NZ and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage will be jointly responsible for administering and prioritising the allocation, and notifying MIQ at least six weeks in advance as to the allocation of spaces

Noted

Proactive release

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

Agree / Disagree

Privacy of natural persons

**Policy Manager, MIQ Policy
MBIE**

19/ 10 / 2021

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

19 / 10 / 21

Background

1. MIQ has recently received a request from Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage (MCH) around the need for additional MIQ access for individuals in the sports and cultural sectors. This request is supported by the Ministers for Sport and Recreation, and Arts, Culture and Heritage.
2. This briefing details the needs of these sectors and seeks your agreement to allow consideration by Border Ministers of an out-of-cycle MIQ group allocation.
3. This request comes at a time when the MIQ system is under significant strain from the community outbreak in the upper North Island along with supporting the arrival of evacuees from Afghanistan. If supported, the earliest that any MIQ space could be available for this allocation is December 2021.
4. The design of a sports and cultural MIQ group allocation is included in Appendix A, and eligibility criteria for an allocation is outlined in Appendix B.

Need for further MIQ access for the sports and cultural sectors (Sports NZ and MCH comment)

5. Across both sectors, current border entry restrictions continue to have a significant impact on sporting and cultural activity, both at a local level and for international competition and representation. Demand from both sectors is growing as activity resumes in other countries as borders reopen.

Current sports sector MIQ access and demand for further MIQ space

6. Currently the sports sector is accessing MIQ space through:
 - Group allocations: these are used for some sporting teams, including returning New Zealand representative teams, and in-bound international teams. This has typically supported those larger and complex groups such as those returning from the Tokyo Olympics; and
 - The Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS), which has supported some individuals.
7. Sports teams have made up a significant portion of overall MIQ group allocations. They have received 1,200 spaces between February 2021 and March 2022, second only to the primary industry sector.
8. However, not all sporting codes and teams have group allocations, and similar to others seeking MIAS space, not all sporting individuals are successful in gaining a MIAS voucher.
9. This has resulted in parts of the sport sector being unable to plan for time-sensitive events, including:
 - Individual athletes unable to travel for qualifying or ranking events and are unlikely to be able to return to elite level of competition;
 - An impact on mid-size sports (such as triathlon) that do not meet the thresholds for group allocations; and
 - A cumulative deterioration of the sector and concern for its long-term viability as athletes are unable to compete internationally.
10. While not proactively seeking expressions of interest, Sport NZ has been made aware of un-met MIQ needs in the next six months. These include:

- Athletes who need to maintain/improve their rankings, including for potential Commonwealth or Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games selection (approximately 15 in the next 3 months);
- Athletes (and support) competing internationally in smaller or non-Olympic sports such as futsal, trampoline, figure skating, and professional athletes (approximately five over the next three months);
- Sports organisations seeking to send teams to compete internationally at world championship level (e.g. wrestling, badminton, waka ama); and
- A range of other sporting events planned in Australia which are unable to go ahead without MIQ places.

Current cultural sector MIQ access and demand for further MIQ space

11. Cultural sector groups typically do not qualify for MIQ group allocations, largely due to the small group sizes. Therefore, applications for the sector are made through MIAS, as most requests are for individuals or small groups.
12. Like sports events, cultural events and activities require a long planning phase (as much as three years for a major festival) and require a certainty that is not provided by the MIAS lobby system.
13. The cultural sector lacks the structured environment of the sports sector (e.g. extensive national sports organisations) and as such, identifying demand tends to be on an ad hoc basis. MCH is aware of un-met demand over the next six months from New Zealanders looking to travel overseas or return from recent engagements including:
 - Internationally recognised popular music and opera singers and bands looking to return to New Zealand to promote albums through touring, or appearing at significant festivals;
 - Support staff returning from the international government-to-government arts event, the Venice Biennale;
 - Orchestra members looking to return to join the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra on permanent and contract positions; and
 - The New Zealand Film Commission have advised that at least nine domestic productions will require approximately 25 MIQ spaces in early 2022. Domestic productions require certainty around MIQ rooms to finalise cast and secure finance agreements. We are also aware of other film cast, crew and directors who need to travel internationally.
14. There is also a high demand for MIQ places to support international performers and film production crew, including:
 - Data sourced from performing arts organisations (New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra) and key cultural festivals (Auckland Arts Festival, New Zealand Festival Trust, Te Matatini) reveals an average monthly requirement of 30 MIQ spaces over the next six months (though we note many are rescheduling due to ongoing uncertainty);
 - Summer festivals scheduled for the period either side of New Year's Eve and throughout summer have announced international artists on their line ups; and
 - The international film production pipeline has also been impacted by difficulties in securing MIQ places. While funding for international screen productions sits with the Economic Development portfolio, as the criteria outlined below allows for applications

from international visitors, it is likely that MCH will receive applications from those involved in international productions.

15. To provide additional certainty for the sports and cultural sectors, Sport NZ and MCH have proposed an out-of-cycle group allocation for 40 MIQ rooms per month. The size of the request is based on known demand from people in both sectors. Appendices A and B provide detail about the design of this group allocation and criteria that would be used by Sport NZ and MCH.

Officials do not consider this request an urgent priority

16. The MIQ system is under significant pressure due to the need to manage the Delta outbreak in the upper North Island and from the high demand from New Zealanders seeking to return home. Since the beginning of the August outbreak approximately 575 rooms have been removed from the managed isolation system intended for border arrivals as four facilities have been converted to quarantine for community cases. Currently MIQ has only been able to meet its obligations to people overseas already holding vouchers by deferring scheduled maintenance, suspending cohorting, and utilising its entire operational contingency.
17. In addition to the increasing community cases, MIQ is also supporting the arrival of evacuees from Afghanistan. You and the Minister of Health have also endorsed a group allocation proposal to bring in critical health workers in late 2021 [2122-1350 refers], which if agreed by Border Ministers, would further constrain MIQ capacity. These challenges sit alongside continuing high demand for MIQ space from New Zealanders seeking to return home.
18. An additional group allocation for the sport and cultural sector is also likely to generate additional criticism of the use of MIQ group allocations. This would be driven by this allocation further reducing the number of MIQ spaces in MIAS available to other individuals seeking to return and travel to New Zealand – as there is no additional space in group allocations.
19. MBIE also recently broadened the Time-Sensitive Travel Allocation criteria to include economic criteria, which should also be able to support the arrival of some of these athletes/artists for time-sensitive events that have significant economic benefits. Given the availability of other pathways, officials do not consider that establishing a new dedicated allocation is an efficient use of space during this current period of high MIQ demand.
20. Based on the MIQ capacity constraints, impact on access to MIQ spaces for individuals and focus on health workers, we do not consider this request a priority that requires urgent consideration by Border Ministers. We recommend you defer consideration of this proposal until December 2021, when Border Ministers are scheduled to meet to discuss the next group allocation package for March to May 2022. Wherever possible, MIQ group allocations should be considered in packages as this enable Ministers to made clear trade-offs between groups based on their relative merit.
21. Deferring the consideration of this proposal will result in some risks. Individual athletes are likely to continue to complain in the media about the lack of MIQ availability and some sporting events may not be able to precede. Similarly, without certainty of MIQ access high-profile cultural/arts events may be cancelled.

Next steps

22. If you agree to consider an out-of-cycle group allocation proposal, this briefing/proposal will be forwarded on to Border Minister for their consideration and decision. If you do not wish to consider this out-of-cycle proposal, officials will ensure the proposal is presented to Border Ministers in December when they are scheduled to meet to discuss the next MIQ group allocation package.

Appendix A: Design of a sports and cultural MIQ group allocation

1. Group allocations are made in packages for a set time period (e.g. November 2021-March 2022). You have previously declined to consider any out-of-cycle group allocation requests from Sport NZ [Sport NZ 2122-0300 refers].
2. However, ministers may wish to consider an out-of-cycle allocation given the large number of requests for support that Sport NZ and MCH have identified (e.g. Winter Olympic and Paralympic qualifications, Auckland Arts Festival) and the timing of these pinnacle events e.g. athletes need to travel now to qualify for the Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games in 2022.
3. In general, group allocations are granted on the basis that the travel is a government priority. In this case, the proposed sports and cultural travel would come under at two of the three criteria for a 'government priority'¹:
 - National interest - sports people are representing New Zealand at the elite level at major international events and cultural sector workers have represented New Zealand at a government-to-government international event (eg, Venice Biennale)
 - Economic impact - Cultural sector workers are contributing to events and projects that are expected to generate significant economic and employment activity within the sector and regions.
4. This approach is consistent with the approach taken to provide dedicated MIQ allocations to other groups, such as for the Construction Sector Accord and exporters.

Specific approach and criteria

5. Sport NZ will act as the sponsoring agency for all sport related requests. MCH will act as the sponsoring agency for all culture related requests. Each agency agrees to the following approach:
 - The allocation is only open to New Zealand citizens or permanent residents for the Sports element, while the cultural element is also open to non-New Zealanders who have a border exception;
 - The allocation will be used if sporting individuals are unsuccessful via MIAS and applicants will need to show evidence of trying to secure via MIAS. Intended to provide certainty for those who need to know in advance that time-sensitive travel can take place but MIAS hasn't yet released MIQ places for the relevant month;
 - The preference would be that this only be used once per 12 months (i.e., is for the pinnacle event for the year; elite athletes need to plan their campaign for the year with an expectation of extended periods overseas). This would be assessed during prioritisation;
 - The initial allocation (for sport) will be prioritised for those that meet the criteria and are already overseas;
 - Sport NZ and High Performance Sport NZ Panel will meet to discuss eligible requests and agree allocations. MCH will consult Creative New Zealand on allocations. A copy of the

¹ The third Government priority being : national security or obligations under international law or international relations.

allocations will be provided to relevant Ministers of Sport and Recreation and Arts, Culture and Heritage, for information;

- Sport NZ and MCH will coordinate the 40 places per month between them and submit one spreadsheet to MBIE MIQ by an agreed date each month with all the required information for the manual voucher allocation. Unallocated places will be released at that time; and
 - Roughly half the space each month will be spread across both sectors, but this may vary month to month depending on demand and the merits of applications.
6. The specific criteria for the sports and cultural elements for the proposed allocation are shown in Appendix B.
 7. The key element for those seeking a sports space in the allocation is that the athlete is representing New Zealand at the elite senior level/pinnacle, have represented New Zealand at a major international event before October 2021, and is returning home.
 8. The key element for those seeking a cultural space in the allocation is that the applicant is critical to the delivery and financial viability of an event or project that is expected to have economic and employment benefits for the sector.

Appendix B: Detailed criteria for the proposed allocation

Sport NZ will apply the following criteria and prioritise applications as below.

- Traveller must be a New Zealand citizen, normally resident in New Zealand, **AND**
- Provides evidence that all other avenues for MIQ booking have been tried and will continue to attempt via MIAS lobby, **AND**
- Travel is endorsed by relevant National Sporting Organisation, **AND**

- Required to travel to
 - a) represent New Zealand at elite senior level in major international events; e.g. Olympics, Paralympics, Commonwealth Games, or pinnacle event for their sport. **OR**
 - b) returning home from having represented New Zealand at major international pinnacle events before October 2021 (e.g. Tokyo 2020 Olympics or Paralympics) **OR**
 - c) required to travel to represent New Zealand at elite senior level for a selection event, where they can demonstrate that international travel is required in order to maintain ranking or selection for major international pinnacle events. **OR**
 - d) Professional athlete required to travel to participate in pinnacle event for their sport

Note that 'elite level' excludes participation at juniors, masters, and other age-group events, but includes coaches and support team members deemed to be critical for the event.

Priority will be given to those who:

- a) competed at Tokyo 2020 Olympics or Paralympics but did not return to NZ immediately after that due to other international pinnacle event commitments, and have been unable to secure MIQ place despite making every attempt to get MIAS booking in the past two months
- b) were required to travel for professional teams that received financial support from Sport Recovery Package (e.g. Warriors), and have been unable to secure MIQ place despite making every attempt to get MIAS booking in the past two months
- c) are required to travel to qualifying events to get places for Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics
- d) have a world ranking in the top 16 for their sport
- e) are required to travel for events already recognised by HPSNZ as pinnacle events
- f) are required to travel (CEO or Chair) sport administrators travelling for internationally significant events which benefit the reputation of New Zealand overseas.

MCH will apply the following criteria and prioritise applications as below.

A successful application must meet Criteria 1, and either Criteria 2 or 3.

1. Criteria 1: Applicants **MUST** show evidence² that:

1.1. the applicant is;

1.1.1. a New Zealand Resident or Citizen, and is returning to New Zealand to work or perform in the Arts, Culture or Heritage industry; **OR**

1.1.2. a New Zealand Resident or Citizen, and is returning to their usual residence³ in New Zealand from working or performing in the Arts, Culture or Heritage industry overseas; **OR**

1.1.3. not a New Zealand Resident or Citizen, and is traveling to New Zealand to work or perform in New Zealand's Arts, Culture or Heritage industry.

AND

1.2. all other avenues to secure MIQ space have been tried and the applicant will continue to attempt to secure a position via the MIAS online system.

2. Criteria 2: Applicants that are coming to New Zealand to work or perform in the Arts, Cultural or Heritage sector (meets either criteria 1.1.1 or 1.1.3) **MUST** show evidence that:

2.1. they are integral to the viability of the activity;⁴

AND

2.2. there is no person locally that could fill the role of the applicant;

AND

2.3. their activity cannot be reasonably undertaken from outside of New Zealand;

AND

2.4. that the activity:

2.4.1. is of national significance; **OR**

2.4.2. is of cultural significance to the particular sector; **OR**

2.4.3. will have a significant impact on New Zealand's international reputation.

3. Criteria 3: An applicant that is a New Zealand Resident or Citizen that is returning to their usual residence in New Zealand from working or performing in the Arts, Culture or Heritage industry overseas (meets criteria 1.1.2) **MUST** show evidence that the activity was:

3.1. of national significance for New Zealand; **OR**

3.2. of cultural significance to the particular sector; **OR**

3.3. had a significant impact on New Zealand's international reputation in the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector

² Evidence could include emails or correspondence between organisers, correspondence with MIQ officials showing they have applied and been unsuccessful for MIQ allocation, or evidence of registration for MIAS system.

³ This will not include applicants whose usual residence is outside of New Zealand, but are a New Zealand Resident or Citizen. Applicants will be required to show evidence of their normal residence being in New Zealand. If they will be working in the Arts Culture and Heritage sector in New Zealand, they can apply under criteria 1.1.1.

⁴ This may include artists performing during the summer festival season – which will be at the discretion of MCH. These artists may also apply to the MIQ Time Sensitive Travel allocation for events with significant economic impact.