



BRIEFING

MIQ allocation for ministerial travel for trade negotiation and international relations

Date:	5 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-1253

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	<p>Agree to allow an out-of-cycle group allocation request for trade negotiation and international relations ministerial travel to go to the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group.</p> <p>Refer this briefing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade and Export Growth.</p> <p>Refer this briefing to Border Ministers for their decision.</p>	6 October 2021
<p>Border Ministers</p> <p>Hon Kris Faafoi Minister of Immigration</p> <p>Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response</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>Agree to establish an ongoing allocation of 20 rooms per month for trade negotiation and international relations ministerial travel to commence in October 2021 (recommendation h).</p>	8 October

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
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Withdrawn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

This briefing:

Minister for Covid-19 Response

- Seeks your agreement to allow an out-of-cycle group allocation request to be made for trade negotiation and international relations ministerial travel (referred to as 'ministerial travel' and includes the associated staff and delegates which form part of Minister's travel contingents); and
- Asks you to refer this request/briefing to Border Ministers for their decision.

Border Ministers

- Seeks your agreement to establish an ongoing allocation of 20 rooms per month for ministerial travel to commence in October 2021.

Recommended action

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

Minister for COVID-19 Response

- a **Note** that there is demand for overseas ministerial travel for trade negotiation and international relation purposes which requires access to MIQ space and is likely to increase.
Noted
- b **Note** that currently ministers are applying for MIQ space through Emergency Allocations, Time Sensitive Travel and the MIQ lobby, however these are not appropriate and/or practical for ministerial travel.
Noted
- c **Note** that MIQ officials advise that an ongoing group allocation is the best allocation pathway for ministerial travel, however this will reduce the number of MIQ spaces available to other individuals seeking to travel to New Zealand.
Noted
- d **Agree** to allow an out-of-cycle group allocation request made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for 20 rooms per month from October 2021 for ministerial travel, and refer this request to the Border Exceptions Ministerial Group for their decision.

Agree Disagree

e **Note** that requests for MIQ space for Pacific ministerial/dignitary travel will continue to be assessed using existing MIQ pathways – either through TST/Emergency Allocations (where eligible), or by booking online using MIAS where possible.

Noted

f **Note** that the proposed MIQ group allocation will enable overseas travel for New Zealand ministers for trade negotiations and international relations purposes until such time as improved international travel conditions apply.

Noted

g **Refer** this briefing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Trade and Export Growth.

Yes No

Border Ministers

h **Agree** to establish an ongoing MIQ allocation for ministerial travel of 20 rooms per month commencing in October 2021.

Agree Disagree

i **Note** the Prime Minister's Office will manage requests for ministerial travel and will take this allocation into account in their usual process, including where necessary prioritising travel requests to ensure demand does not exceed the monthly allocation.

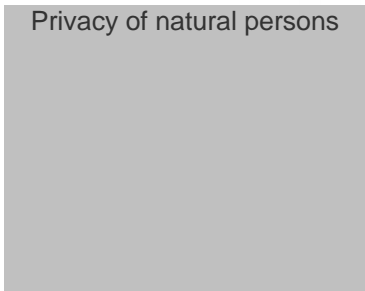
Noted

Proactive release

k **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**

05/ 10 / 2021

A blue ink handwritten signature of Hon Chris Hipkins.

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

6 / 10 / 2021

Background

1. There remains an ongoing demand for ministerial delegations to travel internationally to represent New Zealand. As Covid-19 restrictions ease around the world, this demand is likely to increase.
2. This briefing follows initial advice provided on 1 October [2122-1224 refers] and is updated following ministerial consultation.

Ministers' current access to MIQ space

3. Currently Ministers and their delegations seeking MIQ space can apply through the following ways:
 - Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) Lobby;
 - Time Sensitive Travel Allocation (TST); and
 - Emergency Allocation.
4. Ministerial travel is planned on a flexible and changing basis. The timing and size of delegations travelling often cannot be confirmed until close to the date of travel.
5. MIQ's preferred option for ministerial travel is for travellers to obtain vouchers through the MIQ lobby. However, given high demand for MIQ space, timing constraints and the resulting uncertainty, this option does not provide a workable solution for ministerial travel.
6. The manual allocations, TST and the Emergency Allocation, have limitations for ministerial travel. TST requires an application to be made well in advance (up to 3.5 months in advance of the date of travel), and requires applicants to confirm the names of travellers at this point in time. The Emergency Allocation has a provision for travel to undertake national interest, national security or law enforcement duties overseas. However, the intention is that this allocation should only be used for emergencies.

New Zealand Ministerial travel requests

7. Officials are aware of five international trips planned before the end of 2021 for Ministers – one each for the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Climate Change and two for the Minister for Trade and Export Growth. TST and Emergency Allocation applications have been made for some of these trips, and also a small number of MIQ vouchers have been secured through the lobby.

Pacific travel requests

- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

International relations

Need and possible design of a dedicated ministerial allocation

MIQ Group Allocation

11. To provide certainty of MIQ access for overseas ministerial travel we recommend an out-of-cycle group allocation is made. This would set aside a regular number of places per month for ministerial travel. Based on the current planned ministerial travel, we recommend that this be 20 rooms per month on an ongoing basis.
12. 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 [2122-0300 refers]. However, we consider as out-of-cycle allocation is necessary given the time sensitive nature of the upcoming ministerial travel requests.
13. Officials consider that a dedicated group allocation of 20 is justifiable. In general, group allocations are granted on the basis that the travel is a 'Government priority'. A Government priority can relate to one of the following criteria:
 - a. National interest
 - b. Economic impact
 - c. National security or obligations under international law or international relations.
14. In this case, the proposed ministerial travel would come under at least two of the three criteria.
15. This approach is consistent with the approach taken to providing dedicated MIQ allocations to other groups, such as for the Construction Sector Accord and exporters.
16. We note that this allocation will reduce the number of MIQ spaces available to other individuals seeking to travel to New Zealand, and could therefore generate interest from the media and those trying to access MIQ space.

Eligibility and process

17. We do not recommend that any detailed eligibility criteria be put in place for the monthly allocation. PMO currently oversees and approves requests for overseas ministerial travel. This process would continue.
18. PMO will take this allocation into account as part of their usual process. This would include Government agreeing on the composition of each contingent travelling within the overall monthly allocation limit.
19. We have requested to PMO that travel requests be confirmed at least three weeks prior to travel where possible to enable MIQ planning. This will also allow any unused vouchers to be released back into the MIQ lobby.
20. Where practicable, existing ministerial applications to TST and Emergency Allocations will be moved into the proposed new group allocation process. Existing vouchers gained through the lobby will remain unchanged.

Self-isolation

21. As part of the self-isolation pilot, Cabinet agreed to extend participation to Ministers and government officials attending overseas events as New Zealand government delegates [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers]. Cabinet also authorised the Minister for COVID-19 Response to take decisions on how many pilot places should be reserved for official delegation participants, and to take decisions on their selection.
22. MBIE requires the Minister for Covid-19 Response's decisions on ministerial and government official pilot participants by 9 October 2021. However, given the scale, timing of upcoming ministerial travel and focus on the private sector, we consider an MIQ allocation will still be required alongside the self-isolation pilot.
23. If the MIQ allocation for ministerial travel is approved, officials would monitor it to ensure it remains fit for purpose and is still required as wider changes to border settings are introduced as part of Reconnecting New Zealand.

Next steps and implementation

Minister for Covid-19 Response

24. If you agree to progress an out-of-cycle group allocation request, then:
 - a. Refer this briefing to the Minister of Trade and Export Growth and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for discussion or information; and
 - b. Refer this request/briefing to the Border Ministers for consideration.

Border Ministers

25. If you agree to establish an ongoing allocation of 20 rooms per month for ministerial travel, MBIE will implement this by 11 October 2021. As with all confirmed group allocations, details will be published on the MIQ website shortly after final decisions have been made.
26. MBIE will also provide communication material to assist with reactive questions that Ministers may receive.