



BRIEFING

Minor adjustments to MIQ Emergency Allocation categories

Date:	2 July 2021	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2022-0010

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Agree to the two minor revisions to the wording of the Emergency Allocation categories	2 July 2021

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

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
N/A

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments



BRIEFING

Minor adjustments to MIQ Emergency Allocation criteria

Date:	2 July 2021	Priority:	Urgent
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Purpose

This briefing seeks your decision on two minor revisions to the MIQ Emergency Allocation criteria.

Recommended action

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

- a **Note** that MIQ's current Emergency Allocation is currently set at 350 rooms per fortnight *Noted*
- b **Note** in February 2021, you agreed to changes that broadened the Emergency Allocation categories for travellers with time-critical need to travel and these changes were implemented on 1 April 2021 [briefing 2021-1866 refers] *Noted*
- c **Note** during the implementation of the changes to Emergency Allocation categories, officials have identified two small changes needed to the criteria to ensure they function effectively *Noted*
- d **Agree** to amend Category 2d from:

New Zealand and non-New Zealand citizens, where urgent travel to New Zealand is required for national security, national interest or law enforcement reasons

to:

New Zealand and non-New Zealand citizens, where national security, national interest or law enforcement reasons require urgent travel to New Zealand, or return travel to New Zealand is required on the completion of national security, national interest or law enforcement duties overseas

Agree / Disagree
- e **Agree** to amend Category 2f from:

Citizens or residents of Pacific countries requiring access to time-critical medical treatment in New Zealand under an official medical treatment scheme that is unavailable in their own country, and accompanying clinical personnel or essential caregivers

to:

Citizens or residents of Pacific countries requiring access to time-critical medical treatment which has been scheduled in New Zealand that is unavailable in their own country, and accompanying clinical personnel or essential caregivers

Agree / Disagree

f **Note** that if you agree to these changes, they would come into effect immediately

Noted

g **Note** these changes are likely to have a very minor impact on the number of people eligible for Emergency Allocations and can be accommodated within the existing allocation

Noted

h **Note** demand for Emergency Allocations has been low since the implementation of Quarantine Free Travel with Australia and the Voucher Release Framework, and has consistently been below the 350 room allocation

Noted

i **Note** Emergency Allocation applications have recently increased due to reduced availability of vouchers on MIAS, officials are monitoring this trend and will report back to you in mid-July on:

- a. the number of rooms held for Emergency Allocations going forward given demand;
- b. how unused Emergency Allocation vouchers can be released quickly on MIAS to ensure they can be used

Noted

Privacy of natural persons

Manager, Supply and Allocation
Managed Isolation and Quarantine, MBIE

2 / 07 / 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

6 / 7 / 2021

Background

1. The Emergency Allocation process exists for limited situations that require urgent travel to New Zealand within 14 days of intended travel. MIQ keeps the Emergency Allocation criteria under regular review to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose.
2. In February 2021, you agreed to changes that broadened the Emergency Allocation categories for travellers with time-critical need to travel, which came into effect on 1 April 2021 [Briefing 2021-1866 refers]. You also agreed to increase the rooms set aside for Emergency Allocation to 350 per fortnight.
3. Shortly after you took these decisions, the demand for the Emergency Allocation dropped to very small numbers for several weeks due to the availability of Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) vouchers. The high availability of vouchers on MIAS over this period was due to the introduction of Quarantine-Free Travel (QFT) with Australia, Very High Risk Country travel restrictions and a seasonal dip in demand.
4. The implementation of the Voucher Release Framework has also reduced the demand for Emergency Allocations, as vouchers are now more frequently 'released' online, rather than having long periods of little or no availability.

MBIE recommends minor changes to two categories

5. The recent increase in Emergency Allocation applications has provided MBIE the opportunity to review the revised criteria that came into effect from April 2021. MBIE has identified two minor revisions to the Emergency Allocation criteria to better reflect the intent of previous changes, and the changing global environment.

Category 2d – Urgent travel for national interest

6. Since inception, Category 2d (national interest) has had 41 applications approved, 27 declined and 26 without a decision (either in approval process or application was not completed).
7. Currently this category only allows urgent travel to New Zealand. The recent April 2021 changes to the Emergency¹ and Time-Sensitive Allocations allow for return travel from New Zealand (ie where the traveller departs New Zealand and seeks to return to New Zealand).
8. MBIE notes that when travel can be booked well in advance, space in MIQ can also be secured through the Time-Sensitive Travel process. However, not all travel for national interest purposes can be scheduled well in advance.
9. MBIE recommends that we update this category to include return travel from New Zealand to ensure alignment across the Emergency Allocation categories.

Category 2f – Pacific countries medical treatment travel

10. Since Category 2f (Pacific medical travel) came into effect in April 2021, there have been 21 applications approved, 6 declined and 9 without a decision (either in approval process or application was not completed).
11. The revision to this category is proposed to remove the requirement for medical treatment to be under an 'official medical treatment scheme.' This is because the requirement is not

¹ The April 2021 change to Category 2e includes return travel to New Zealand after visiting a terminally ill relative overseas.

clearly defined and is limiting access to some urgent medical treatment for people in the Pacific unnecessarily.

12. Requiring evidence of a scheduled appointment date in New Zealand will allow MBIE to assess the urgency of the application, and to ensure that the traveller is under the care of a New Zealand-based health professional should issues arise while they are within a facility.
13. MBIE will also update the accompanying evidence requirements to include proof that they have a medical appointment booked in New Zealand with a named treatment provider, and have the support of the relevant Pacific island government agency or the New Zealand Ministry of Health.

These changes can be accommodated within the current Emergency Allocation

14. MBIE anticipates that these changes will have a minor impact on the number of emergency allocations granted per fortnight and thus can be met within the existing allocation. The Emergency Allocation has never exceeded the allocated 350 rooms per fortnight - see table 1 below.

Date	Number of approved Emergency Allocation applications
11 Jan - 24 Jan 2021	270
25 Jan 2021 - 7 Jan 2021	244
8 Feb 2021 - 21 Feb 2021	251
22 Feb 2021 - 7 March 2021	237
8 March 2021 - 21 March 2021	231
22 March 2021 - 4 April 2021	53
05 April 2021 - 18 April 2021	19
19 April 2021 - 2 May 2021	11
3 May-2021 - 16 May 2021	15
17 May-2021- 30 May 2021	13
31 May 2021 – 13 June 2021	22

Table 1: Approved Emergency Allocation applications

Next steps

15. If you agree to these changes, the revised criteria will come into effect immediately. MBIE will make the relevant changes to our communications, website material and application forms. We would also work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health to ensure they are aware of these changes.
16. MBIE will also provide you with further advice on the number of rooms required for Emergency Allocations going forward and how Emergency Allocation vouchers can be quickly returned onto MIAS, if they are unused.