



AIDE MEMOIRE

Update on managed isolation capacity and utilisation

Date:	15 November 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-1814

Information for Minister's Office

Josh Hercus
Private Secretary – Managed Isolation and Quarantine

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, Allocation and Supply		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

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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 Withdrawn |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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Managed isolation capacity and occupancy changes

Date:	15 November 2021	Priority:	High
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Purpose

To provide information requested by the Minister's Office regarding our current managed isolation occupancy levels and utilisation as shown in the daily snapshot.

Kara Isaac
General Manager
MIQ Policy, MBIE

15 / 11 /2021

Reasons for current lower managed isolation occupancy as reflected in daily snapshot

No MIAS vouchers for November were released from 21 October – 9 November due to the need to preserve capacity in case additional quarantine facilities were required

1. As the Auckland community outbreak continued to evolve and numbers started significantly increasing again in early October, the Minister was consulted on the relative priority of preserving capacity in case additional quarantine facilities were verses releasing MIAS vouchers for border arrivals.
2. This resulted in MIQ first reducing then pausing the release of vouchers for rooms from late October – mid November in order to ensure that additional Auckland quarantine facilities for community cases could be brought online if required [2122-0921 and 2122-1313 refer].
3. With the implementation of the care in the community model and resulting significant increase in COVID-19 community cases remaining at home rather than coming into MIQ, we started releasing November vouchers again on 9 November. We expect to release another 661 in the lobby this Thursday, as shown in the below table.

Table 1

Lobby date	October vouchers released	November vouchers released
28 September	1,434	1,600
5 October	316	1,501
12 October	0	159
21 October	0	0
2 November	N/A	0
9 November	N/A	507 (61 handed back – 12%)
17 November	N/A	661 (planned)

4. We also provided advice to the Minister on 3 November regarding the portfolio configuration of managed isolation rooms and quarantine rooms as without certainty of the Minister's expectations we were unable to release more vouchers. On 9 November we received the Minister's response (Option A –stabilisation), which means we can now release additional vouchers for November and December.

Impact of the change to the 7 day stay

5. As the office has noted there is a significant drop is expected managed isolation occupancy over the next six days from 15-21 November. This is directly attributable to the change yesterday from a 14 to a 7 day stay which meant that we released over 2,500 people in a single day who would have otherwise been released over a week.
6. This is a significant change that was implemented over a short timeframe. As we only have a very small National Planning team, their priority since 28 October has been introducing this system change.
7. We also could not release rooms immediately as we had to work through the details including:
 - Who would be eligible to be released
 - What facilities they were in and operational planning to support their early exit
 - Of those eligible, who needed to stay past day 7 (eg refugees, Antarctica, those whose release time was late at night and therefore would require an additional night, people who did not meet low-risk indicators etc)
 - Continuing to preserve capacity in case further quarantine facilities or rooms were required (across all regions)
8. This planning takes time. The short timeframe meant by the time the above detail was worked through, there was insufficient time to release the additional rooms for November into the lobby and give returnees enough time to plan travel to utilise the rooms. The intensity of re-planning for the move to 7 day stays has consumed all available planning resource in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new model.

9. The planning team are now working hard restacking the managed isolation portfolio in line with the 7 day stay/11 day cycle in order to be able to maximise the number of vouchers we can release for November and December, within existing workforce constraints.
10. We expect to see utilisation increase again from 22 November. We are also expecting to still see some increase between now and then due to people travelling this week who have either received an emergency allocation since Friday or who will do so in the next few days.

...But operational capacity of 4,000 rooms on daily snapshot does not reflect usable managed isolation rooms

More rooms have been lost to quarantine than are currently reflected

11. Pre QFT operational capacity sat at 4,500 rooms, this was then reduced to 4,000 rooms for the Minister's QFT reserve
12. As the office knows, we have fully utilised the Minister's QFT 500 reserve plus operational contingency to be able to respond to the community outbreak.
13. However, 614 rooms¹ have moved from managed isolation to quarantine since August
14. The Naumi in Auckland (176 rooms) has also largely been dedicated to managing the flow of Afghan evacuees from September onwards, with evacuees having been received over this time period.
15. Conversion of facilities to quarantine and the use of the Naumi for evacuees has reduced the number of rooms available for managed isolation by approximately 800 since late August 2021. As such, 3,700 rooms would be a more accurate reflection of current managed isolation capacity.
16. This will decrease further if more quarantine rooms in Rotorua, Wellington, or Christchurch are required.

Other important factors

17. Ministers have also taken a range of other decisions recently that impact on capacity that have not yet been factored into the graph that impact our capacity and ability to issue more MIAS vouchers. In particular, the creation of new group allocations over and above the existing "ceiling". These include the Ministerial travel allocation, the health worker allocation and the possible new sporting and cultural allocation.
18. Additionally, on 1 November emergency allocations (EAs) increased from 700 a month to 800 a month. With changes coming in on 22 November this may need to be increased further. In past weeks, we have been using our entire EA capacity
19. Finally, incoming arrivals from Afghanistan have been substantially (ie 6x) higher than MFAT's initial forecast of 50 per month. We are expecting 111 arrivals this week with another 140 expected next week and a further 300 by Christmas. This means the Naumi will not be available for use for managed isolation for other border arrivals until early 2021, if then.

¹ Full conversion of Holiday Inn Auckland, Novotel Ibis Auckland, Amohia Hamilton, partial conversion of Sudima Christchurch