



AIDE MEMOIRE

22 April update on MIQ head office workforce transition

Date:	22 April 2022	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-4105

Information for Minister(s)

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Andrew Milne	Associate Deputy Secretary, MIQ	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Nora Burghart	Acting General Manager, MIQ Policy		

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 Withdrawn |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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Purpose

This aide memoire provides you with more detail on the progress of the MIQ head office workforce transition, as well as responses to questions from your office about invoicing, waivers and lessons learnt work.

Andrew Milne
Associate Deputy Secretary, MIQ
MBIE

22 / 04 / 2022

Background

1. On 4 April and 13 April we provided you with updates on the progress of the MIQ workforce transition [aides memoire 2021-3302 and 2021-4051 refer], following the decision to accelerate the scale-down of the MIQ network.
2. These updates described the rapid reduction in the MIQ workforce over the past two months, and set out the significant workforce change process underway for remaining MBIE-employed staff in order to fulfil good faith and legislated employment obligations.
3. This update provides you with the latest workforce data, as well as further detail around the activities that head office staff are currently working on.

Update on head office workforce transition

4. Detailed design work is progressing on ongoing head office staffing needs. This design work is based on an assessment of the ongoing work once all facilities are closed.
5. On 22 March, we provided you and the Minister of Finance with advice that proposed decommissioning the MIQ network, in its entirety, by August 2022 rather than December 2022 (as previously agreed) [BR 2122-4081 refers]. Your decision will impact this design work.
6. The existence of facilities dictates certain operational and national support functions. Once all MIQ facilities have been decommissioned, the residual MIQ workforce can be scaled down to only those working on readiness planning (i.e. for reactivating MIQ, if necessary), those developing the National Quarantine Capability (NQC), and a small team to deal with residual enquiries, complaints, and reporting matters. It is anticipated that a team of between 30 and 50 staff will be required, and that this team will decrease in size as work progresses.

7. Key milestones for this work are:
- Consultation commences with the release of the proposal on 2 May
 - Consultation closes on the transition proposal (mid-May)
 - Decision on the new structure by MIQ Leadership (late May)
 - Affected individuals notified of outcome, formal notice period commences and incremental implementation of new structure commences (from June).
8. As of 19 April, there are 185.3 MBIE employed FTE in head office (a 21% decrease from 31 March). The following table provides a breakdown of head office FTE by employment type over the past month. The table also provides updated indicative FTE levels for 1 May based on confirmed resignations received to date (a further reduction of 14 FTE).

MIQ head office FTE by employment type

Date	Permanent	Fixed-term	Contracted	Seconded	Total FTE
31 March	56	125	35	19	235
7 April	54	108	31	15	209
19 April	51.6	94.2	28	11.5	185.3
1 May	49.6	91.2	21	9.5	171.3

9. The timeline for fixed-term roles concluding, as of 19 April, is set out in the table below. 31 March and 7 April figures are provided for comparison. This table illustrates how fixed-term end dates are being brought forward as head office resourcing needs are confirmed.

	Head office fixed-term FTE end dates										
	Total	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2023
31 March	125		2	25	5	3	25	13	7	7	38
7 April	108	2	8	22	7	3	22	11	7	5	21
19 April	94.2	1.2*	15	18	8	1	22	9	5	4	11

*These 1.2 FTE due to finish by the end of April are in addition to the 2 FTE identified in the 7 April line that have already departed.

Key areas of work for head office staff

10. As previously advised, we are already seeing a number of head office staff leave for new opportunities. Those that remain are focussed on the following key areas of work.

Group	Current work focus	FTE as at 19 April	Projection 1 May	Projection 1 June
Office of the Deputy Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documenting the MIQ knowledge legacy • Ombudsmen and judicial review responses/follow ups • Official correspondence and Ministerial servicing. 	20.5	18.5	18.5
Strategy & Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the network and workforce transition 	23.6	23.6	23.6

Group	Current work focus	FTE as at 19 April	Projection 1 May	Projection 1 June
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract management for both facilities exiting now, and the 3-4 that may remain post June Partnership management (including Iwi and commercial) Development of the programme business case for future isolation and quarantine capability (the NQC) 			
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy advice to support the NQC, legacy and readiness, network and workforce transition, Order changes, and proactive releases 	14.8	11.8	10.8
Operations Delivery & Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting operational delivery of the remaining facilities Monitoring workforce compliance with Health Orders Legacy work relating to operational policy, SOPs and interim guidance Supporting de-designation and decommissioning of facilities Processing the backlog of fee waiver applications Support for special groups (maritime, refugees, evacuees) 	80	77	76
Programmes & Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the network and workforce transition Wrap-up of other change work (N95s, children's programme, testing changes, Hiki Wairua, and CAMMS) 	29.4	25.4	22.4
Service Quality & Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readiness planning to reactivate MIQ in the short to medium-term Complaints and disputes resolution Property management (RIQCCs) 	17	15	14
Total FTE		185.3	171.3	165.3

Update on invoicing, waivers and lessons learnt work

11. Your office has asked for information about some particular areas of MIQ work. Please find responses below.

How many people are still to be invoiced for their stay? When do we expect all invoices to have been issued?

12. The MIQ invoicing process was set up at pace at a time when it was unclear how long it would be needed and how many people would be coming through the border. The system was initially heavily reliant on the manual collection and processing of data which came from various agencies, and this data wasn't always accurate or complete. As previously advised, a number of improvements have been made which has allowed for the increased automation of invoicing.
13. Invoicing is now up to the point of returnees that left MIQ from 10-17 January 2022. We are currently ten weeks behind our normal processing timeframes after moving from 14 day stays to 7 and 10 day stays in MIQ (which resulted in more people going through MIQ). We expect to finish processing February invoices (which will be the last big batch) at the end of May.
14. However there still remain 6,474 unmatched records in the database for the period 25/03/21 to 28/02/22 that are yet to be assessed. These are what we call 'liability not determined' records that need to be investigated to see what data is available to have their liability determined before invoicing. Due to the complexity of the fees regime and the quality of data, there may be cases where we will not be able to determine if someone is liable for an invoice, or to find contact details for them.
15. The number of people yet to be invoiced will not be known until these unmatched records are processed through the liability rules, which determines if they are liable or not. For example, we would expect a proportion of these currently unmatched records to not require invoices to be generated. The work on this is ongoing.

Invoicing backlog (invoices prior to March 24 2021)

16. In November 2021 MBIE-MIQ estimated that a backlog of invoices from prior to March 24, 2021, would be worth up to \$36.2 million. We have now completed the first full run through of data and invoices up to March 24, 2021, for this backlog, which resulted in \$15.433 million or 4,603 invoices being sent. We had 1,400 emails bounced/diverted to the MIQ backlog inbox. Of this, roughly 800 have since had contact details found and sent. However, this invoiced amount is at greater variance than we expected.
17. We are still investigating the difference between the original estimate of \$36.2 million versus what has actually been sent which initially looks like it could include groups, maritime, unmatched data and other items. This reconciliation will take some time due to the data quality issues and therefore we will aim to complete by the end of April/early May. In the interim, we are prioritising our BAU invoicing and therefore no new invoices will be sent to the pre-March 2021 group until the difference is better understood.

How many fee waivers do we have on hand still to process? What's the time to process each fee waiver? When do we expect to complete this process?

18. We began 2022 with a significant backlog of fee waiver applications, as resources in the team in the previous six months had been frequently diverted to managing the New South Wales managed return process and an increase in Emergency Allocation applications stemming from MIAS capacity pressures and the new Emergency Allocation category set up for people in Australia impacted by the deferral of Reconnecting New Zealand Stage 1.
19. As at 19 April there are now 2,221 waiver applications in process or to be processed, down from 5,087 in December last year.
20. We processed an average of 457 applications per week between 28 February and 17 April 2022, with an average weekly net decrease in outstanding applications of 255. On this basis we estimate that the current backlog will be completed in early-mid June.
21. Between 28 February and 17 April, we received 202 new waiver requests per week on average. We are projecting a 40% increase in fee waiver applications from the end of April as the 1 January to 1 March 2022 invoices are issued.

22. It is difficult to estimate when all waiver applications will be processed, as new waiver applications will continue to flow in as long as invoicing is underway (it is often the issuing of invoices and/or the referral to debt collection agencies that prompts people to apply for a waiver). This is compounded by the fact that there is currently no time limit in the MIQ Charges Regulations on when a person can apply for a waiver.

How many open Ombudsman's complaints are there? What's the timeframe for response to each of these?

23. At 31 March we had 83 open Ombudsman cases. If the average of 122 days to resolve a case is maintained, we can expect these to be open until September.
24. Fee waiver cases have typically taken an average of 149 days to close, which means some may still be open in October. However, the time the Office of the Ombudsman is taking to close cases is trending down, so this timeframe may come forward.
25. In addition to Ombudsman's complaints, MIQ currently has 225 active MBIE complaints and receives on average 25-30 per day (mostly related to fee waivers and/or invoicing). We expect some of these complaints may be escalated to the Ombudsman.

How are lessons learnt from the MIQ experience being captured? What will be the output 'product' from this work?

26. Lessons learnt from the MIQ experience are being captured across all aspects of MIQ at national, regional and facility level. The information will be consolidated and the final output of this product will inform the readiness planning work.

Next steps

27. We will continue to provide you with weekly updates on the progress of the workforce transition via the weekly report.