



BRIEFING

Bringing forward deactivation of Auckland MIQ facilities

Date:	3 June 2022	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2122-4710

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	<p>Note that you have previously agreed to deactivate the remaining three MIQ facilities in Auckland at the end of July, for decommissioning at the end of August.</p> <p>Note that while there is currently limited demand for the Auckland facilities this will drop significantly at the end of June when Afghanistan arrivals and refugees are no longer accommodated in MIQ facilities.</p> <p>Note that Auckland Regional Public Health and the DHBs' Care in the Community and MIQ team support the early deactivation of facilities in order to allow health staff to be redeployed.</p> <p>Indicate your preference for whether we bring forward the deactivation of Auckland facilities to the end of June.</p> <p>Agree to consult with the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Health on this decision.</p>	10 June 2022

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Andrew Milne	Associate Deputy Secretary, MIQ	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Kara Isaac	General Manager, Policy		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Ministry of Health

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments



Bringing forward deactivation of Auckland MIQ facilities

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Purpose

The purpose of this briefing is to seek your direction on deactivating some or all of the remaining Auckland MIQ facilities at the end of June (currently planned for end of July) due to decreased demand.

Recommended action

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

- a **Note** that on 25 April 2022 you agreed to bring forward the decommissioning of the four remaining MIQ facilities to the end of August 2022 [BN 2122-4081 refers].

Noted
 - b **Note** that as of Thursday 2 June there were 48 people in MIQ facilities in Auckland comprising of 31 refugees, 12 community cases, 4 arrivals from Afghanistan, and 1 mariner.

Noted
 - c **Note** that remaining demand for rooms will drop significantly at the end of June when refugees and Afghanistan arrivals no longer enter MIQ.

Noted
 - d **Note** that Auckland Regional Public Health and the Auckland District Health Boards' Care in the Community & MIQ team have stated that they support the deactivation of all three MIQ facilities at the end of June so that they can deploy health staff elsewhere in the system.

Noted
 - e **Agree** to either
 - a. **Option One:** Bring forward the deactivation of two facilities to 30 June 2022, with community cases continuing to enter the remaining facility until the end of July.

Agree / *Disagree*
- OR**
- b. **Option Two:** Bring forward the deactivation of all three facilities to the end of June, with community cases being supported by the National Alternative Accommodation Service from 1 July.

Agree / *Disagree*
- OR**
- c. **Option Three:** Deactivate the Waipuna Hotel on 30 June and continue operating the other two until the end of July or for as long as staffing allows (whichever is earliest).

Agree / *Disagree*

f **Note** that you are required to consult with the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Health on this decision.

Noted

g **Agree** to proactively release this briefing with appropriate withholdings under the Official Information Act 1982

Agree Disagree



Andrew Milne
Deputy Secretary
Managed Isolation and Quarantine, MBIE

3 / 06 / 2022



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

09 / 06 / 2022

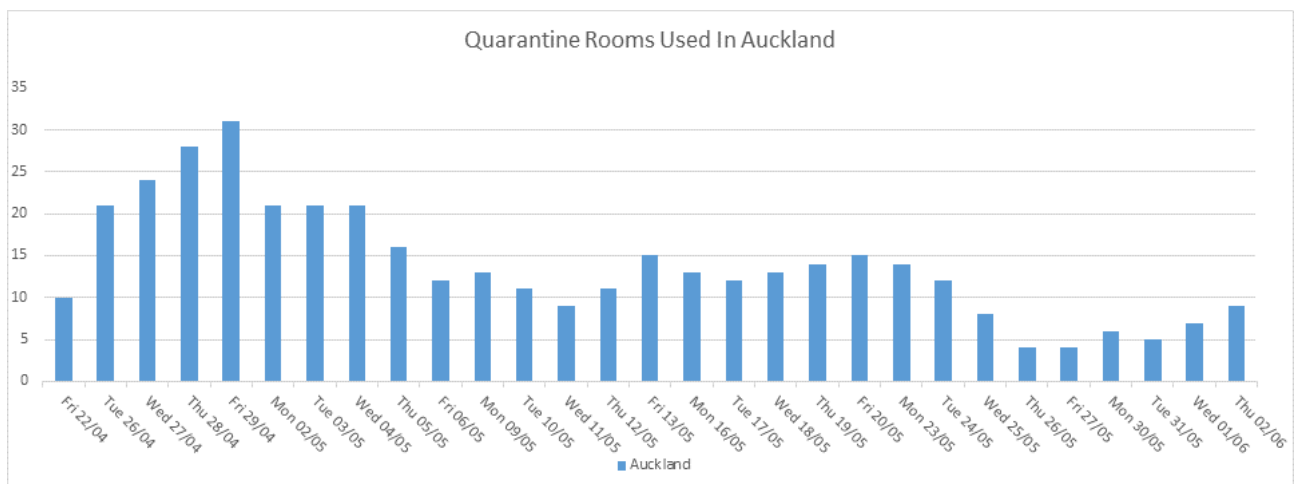
Background

1. With the recent deactivation of the Commodore Hotel Christchurch there now remain three Auckland facilities in the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) network. The Jet Park, Holiday Inn Airport, and Waipuna Hotel.
2. On 25 April you agreed to bring forward the decommissioning of these facilities to the end of August [BN 2122-4081 refers].
3. There continues to be limited demand for the three Auckland facilities from a combination of arrivals of refugees and people from Afghanistan at the border, along with a small number of community cases.
4. As of Thursday, 2 June, there were 48 people in MIQ facilities in Auckland. These comprised of 31 refugees, 12 community cases, 4 arrivals from Afghanistan, and 1 mariner. Mariners have now ceased entering MIQ, and refugees and arrivals from Afghanistan will no longer be accommodated from the end of June. This leaves only community cases remaining in July.
5. This briefing seeks your direction as to whether in response to significantly decreasing demand of MIQ accommodation in July whether deactivating some or all facilities should be brought forward to the end of June.

From the end of June there is expected to be limited demand for accommodation for community cases in Auckland

The use of quarantine rooms in Auckland has been declining in the last six weeks

6. The graph below shows the number of quarantine rooms utilised in the last six weeks in Auckland.
7. If community cases continue to be accommodated in MIQ in July, this can easily be achieved in one facility even if there was a significant increase in cases requiring rooms due to a “winter wave”.



8.

Graph 1: Quarantine rooms used in Auckland 22/4 – 2/6

All three facilities are contracted to the end of August

9. [Commercial in Confidence] Following Cabinet's decision in March and your subsequent decision in April about the timing of decommissioning the final MIQ facilities, all three Auckland facilities have had their contracts extended until the end of August. There is a 90-day contracted termination for convenience, however given that we are now within that period this clause could not be triggered by an early deactivation.
10. [Commercial in Confidence] As part of the contract extensions to 31 August, MBIE has agreed to pay the facilities an uplift in fees on and from 1 June to 31 July, while facilities will receive a lower fee (calculated at their unoccupied room rate) from 1 August to 31 August. As such, if the deactivation of any, or all, of the facilities are brought forward to 30 June - MBIE will remain liable for the fees under the respective contracts until 31 August.
11. In addition, there are currently a further 110 MBIE employed roles at the three facilities, predominantly security officers. The cost of these roles is approximately Commercial Information a month allowing for salary, personnel related costs, and overheads.
12. These staff are currently subject to a formal change process which provided 31 August as the proposed disestablishment date for their roles. Cost savings in MBIE employed staff costs prior to 31 August will be dependent on resignations to move to other employment or earlier redeployment opportunities being confirmed.

We recommend that the deactivation of at least two Auckland facilities be brought forward to 30 June

13. Due to impending ceasing of refugees and arrivals from Afghanistan entering MIQ and the expected demand for rooms for community cases in Auckland in July, we recommend that the deactivation of at least two Auckland facilities be brought forward to 30 June. This will also assist us to manage the expected attrition of Auckland based MBIE security staff over the coming weeks.

Option One: Bring forward the deactivation of two Auckland facilities to 30 June, consolidating community cases into the one remaining facility for July

14. Given the low demand for MIQ for community cases we recommend bringing forward the deactivation of at least two Auckland facilities to 30 June.
15. This will allow any community cases to be accommodated until the end of July, while progressing the decommissioning process of the other two facilities from 1 July.

Option Two: Bring forward deactivation of all three Auckland facilities to 30 June

16. Option Two would result community cases not being accepted into any facility after 22 June. Any community cases that required accommodation from that date would be supported by the National Alternative Accommodation Service (NAAS).

Comment from Auckland Regional Public Health and Auckland District Health Boards' Care in the Community & MIQ team

17. Whilst keeping one facility open seems a pragmatic middle ground to be precautionary heading into winter there is very low utilisation of MIQs at present, and this has been the case for weeks.
18. Therefore it is not the most efficient use of health staff, and we would support the closure of all facilities at the end of June.

19. ARPHs and DHB staff have already been exploring more options of alternative accommodation to prepare for the closure of MIQs to support community cases at the end of July, so we don't consider that bringing forward the closure by a month will be an issue.

Option Three: Deactivate the Waipuna Hotel on 30 June and continue operating the other two until the end of July or for as long as staffing allows (whichever is earliest).

20. The Waipuna Hotel is currently the facility that is accommodating refugees and arrivals from Afghanistan. It only has eight quarantine rooms. This means that it would not be efficient to operate it as a facility for community cases when the Holiday Inn and JetPark have over 400 quarantine rooms available.
21. Once the final cohorts of refugees and arrivals from Afghanistan depart from the facility on 24 June it will no longer serve any useful purpose in the MIQ network and should be deactivated.
22. Additionally, three recent resignations of onsite Operations Security Managers (OSMs), and expected forthcoming resignations of another two, mean that it will not be possible to staff all three facilities beyond the end of June unless additional OSMs were brought in from Christchurch. This would not be justifiable given they would be managing an empty facility.

Iwi have been advised about the possible earlier deactivation of Auckland facilities

23. MIQ engage with Iwi at a regular fortnightly Iwi partners MIQ hui, and have provided the forward plans for downsizing of the network. To date, there has been no specific concern raised for the reduction in the network in the Auckland region. For example, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are supportive of revitalising the hotel network urgently to prepare for Te Matatini, the nationwide Kapa Haka event later in 2022.

Next steps

24. We will communicate your decision to the facilities so that they can notify their staff before a public announcement is made. Affected MBIE employed staff will also be informed.
25. Auckland Regional Public Health, relevant DHBs, and iwi will also be informed in advance of any public announcement.