



## BRIEFING

### Initial Results of a desktop review of Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities

<b>Date:</b>	5 March 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security classification:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-2564

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins <b>Minister for COVID-19 Response</b>	<p><b>Note</b> that officials recommend further investigation of the suitability of current MIQFs once the physical ventilation review is completed in May</p> <p><b>Discuss</b> with officials if you wish for further work to be undertaken on alternative facilities, such as custom-builds</p>	19 March 2021

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Kara Isaac	General Manager MIQ Policy, MBIE	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Privacy of natural persons	Policy Director, MIQ Policy		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Ministry of Health

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 Withdrawn           |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



# BRIEFING

## Managed Isolation Facilities: Criteria and standards for facilities

<b>Date:</b>	5 March 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
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### Purpose

To provide you with the initial results of a desktop review that assessed the suitability of current Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQFs) against a set of agreed criteria, as requested following initial advice on options to strengthen transmission risk management in MIQFs [briefing 2021-2085 refers].

### Recommended action

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

- a **Note** that MBIE has undertaken a desktop review of 32 currently contracted Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities with the Ministry of Health's support  
*Noted*
- b **Note** that you have also received initial findings of the desktop ventilation review [HR 20210455 refers]  
*Noted*
- c **Note** that MBIE will undertake further work to determine the viability of the Bay Plaza Hotel as part of contract renewal procedures, as the desktop ventilation review indicates that the Bay Plaza's issues may be challenging to mitigate over the longer term  
*Noted*
- d **Note** that all 32 facilities meet 15 of the 21 criteria assessed in this review, with mitigations in place for the remaining six criteria  
*Noted*
- e **Note** that officials recommend further investigation of the suitability of current MIQFs once the physical ventilation review is completed in May  
*Noted*
- f **Discuss** with officials if you wish for further work to be undertaken on alternative facilities, such as custom-builds  
*Agree / Disagree*

Kara Isaac  
General Manager MIQ Policy  
MBIE

5.3.21

Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister for COVID-19 Response

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## Background

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1. Following genome sequencing indicating that a community case of COVID-19 from a recent MIQ returnee was connected to another returnee in the Pullman Auckland Managed Isolation Facility, we provided you with initial advice on options to strengthen transmission risk management in MIQFs [briefing 2021-2085 refers]. As part of that briefing, MBIE and the Ministry of Health (MoH) agreed to conduct a review of the suitability of current Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) facilities and report back to you in early March.
2. This briefing outlines the interim findings of our desktop review which assessed 32 MIQ facilities against 21 criteria. Two of the 23 criteria are connected to the ventilation of facilities and have not been examined as part of this review, instead leaving this to the ventilation review [HR20210455 refers]. As outlined in the public health focused end-to-end assessment of the MIQ system, advice relating to risk reduction will be packaged and sequenced where possible to ensure interdependencies and any resulting trade-offs are easily visible. This briefing forms part of the package of advice focused on Infrastructure and Workforce and should be viewed in that context.

### The criteria for facilities has evolved over time...

3. The original criteria used to identify hotel for use as MIQ facilities were largely operational in to support their rapid establishment. Criteria have evolved over time and focus on whether appropriate infection prevention and controls can be implemented (given the context of using hotels); that appropriate security arrangements can be made; and that appropriate wellbeing aspects are in place.
4. Over time, the development of the operating model and Standard Operating Procedures has seen an increase in the number of criteria that a facility should meet. The general approach continues to be that the criteria are focused on the management of COVID-19 infection prevention and control risks, security risks and ensuring the wellbeing of returnees.

### MBIE, with MoH's support, has undertaken a three-step desktop review of MIQ facilities

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5. The three steps taken were to:
  - a. Identify and agree criteria
  - b. Undertake a desktop assessment of each MI or MQ facility
  - c. Undertake a collective analysis of MIQ portfolio of facilities
6. The first step for the review was to compile all existing lists of criteria for facilities, and then to refine this to the structural and locational factors that matter for the suitability of a MIQF. This means that there is a tendency towards infection prevention and control requirements, which was also informed by Public Health involvement in the process. The review did not seek to create a comprehensive list of possible considerations for the suitability of MIQFs. These criteria are instead a 'first hurdle' for the suitability of any given facility. Other criteria, such as availability of workforce (particularly health) or compliance with operational requirements are also important when considering the use of a new facility, but require different considerations.
7. In the course of this process, we developed a list of 21 criteria, two of which apply only to subsets of the full 32 MIQFs. **Annex One** outlines these criteria in more detail.
8. The second step was to undertake a desktop review of the 32 MIQF around New Zealand to rate each against the criteria.

9. We then analysed the information generated to identify whether the current mitigations are appropriate.

## **Ventilation criteria are being reviewed separately**

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10. As referenced above, there is a separate review of ventilation systems underway. The first phase of this review is a desktop exercise which MoH is leading. The initial results, which consider 21 of the 32 MIQFs, make nine recommendations. At this stage it appears that there are proactive measures that will need to be implemented across all facilities. Nonetheless, assessments indicate that, in principle, appropriate mitigation can be achieved for all ventilation issues, except in the case of the Bay Plaza Hotel in Wellington.
11. MBIE is commencing a second phase of the ventilation review, which will involve physical assessments of each facility. This phase of the review will be undertaken over the next two months and regular updates will be provided to you as the facilities are assessed.

## **The existing MIQFs broadly meet the criteria of this desktop review**

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12. Seventeen of the 19 remaining criteria apply to all MIQFs. As hotels are not designed to be infectious disease isolation and quarantine facilities, it was expected that some criteria would not be able to be met without mitigations. However, the review has found that all facilities meet or are able to mitigate 15 of these criteria. We have detailed below where mitigations have been put in place.
13. Two criteria apply only to a select group of hotels: the four dual-use facilities and the three that contain long-term residents, respectively. Mitigations in place for these two criteria are also outlined below.
14. **Annexes Two and Three** provide more detail on the findings of the review.

### **Where the existing MIQFs do not meet the criteria, arrangements are in place to mitigate risk of transmission**

15. Facilities have had to put in place mitigations to meet seven criteria (see Annexes Two and Three):
  - a. 2m physical distancing on entry and exit
  - b. Distance from international airport/ MIQ facility
  - c. Dual-use: separate isolation and quarantine zones
  - d. MIQF areas separated from long-term residents of hotels
  - e. MIQF has Building Warrant of Fitness and meets Fire Safety requirements
  - f. Physically distanced evacuation possible
  - g. Outdoor exercise area is available on site

*Criteria: Two metres' physical distancing on entry and exit*

16. Six hotels have small lobbies that do not permit two metres of physical distancing on entry and exit. This can create a transmission risk where there are too many people in a small space as returnees are processed on arrival or exit.
17. This has been resolved by using a variety of operational practices appropriate to each facility to provide for physical distancing on entry and exit. These approaches include holding people on buses where necessary and the repurposing of entrances to establish single-direction flow.



18. In Auckland, large numbers of concurrent arrivals are distributed across several MIQFs to reduce the number of new returnees at a single facility at any given time, although the recent decision to cohort returnees when practicable will affect this policy once implemented more widely.

*Criteria: Distance from international airport or MIQ facility*

19. The longer the travel time from an arriving flight to a facility, the greater the probability of transmission on New Zealand soil, relative to immediate isolation in-room. Auckland and Christchurch are the only two operating international airports, and Hamilton is relatively close to Auckland. The number of international flights direct into Christchurch is currently insufficient to make full use of the MIQF facilities there.
20. Standard Operating Procedures are in place to mitigate the transmission risk for those travelling on buses to Hamilton and Rotorua, or on flights to Wellington or Christchurch. These policies include processes to manage IPC risks at rest-stops, measures to ensure drivers and returnees use PPE and maintain physical distancing, and regarding the handling of luggage. They are also subject to regular review to ensure they remain in line with IPC requirements and the latest evidence relating to COVID-19 transmission risk.

*Criteria: Dual-use: separate isolation and quarantine zones*

21. In order to reduce the possibility of transmission from those in quarantine (who have COVID-19) and those in managed isolation (who may not), dual-use facilities are required to separate the quarantine and isolation areas of their buildings.
22. Facilities in Wellington and Christchurch operate as both isolation and quarantine facilities. In all cases, these occupy separate zones of the buildings. However, stairways, hallways and lifts are sometimes shared between zones. Where this is the case, mitigations are in place such as escorts, or in one case, stairway-only access for quarantined returnees to minimise transmission risk.

*Criteria: MIQF areas separated from long-term residents*

23. Two facilities have long-term residents living in apartments at the same address. At one of the facilities residents live in a different tower. In the other they have completely separated floors. Separate entranceways and lifts are also used to separate residents from returnees.

*Criteria: MIQF has Building Warrant of Fitness and meets Fire Safety requirements*

24. Thirty MIQFs meet FENZ requirements, although three of these require mitigation due to lack of sprinklers or limited area for evacuation and assembly. A further two (the Grand Mercure and Pullman in Auckland) do not meet FENZ evacuation requirements as a result of a combination of their lack of sprinklers and height.

NB: These hotels meet FENZ requirements for a hotel however FENZ considers that MIQFs are more akin to detention facilities and that, as such, these two facilities do not meet detention standards.

*Criteria: Physically distanced evacuation possible*

25. Two facilities may not be able to achieve two metres' physical distancing during all times of evacuation, due to limited area for assembly.

*Criteria: Outdoor exercise area is available on site*

26. For the wellbeing of returnees and in line with direction from the Ombudsman, MIQ facilities must provide returnees with an opportunity to take an hour of fresh air and exercise a day, ideally in green space. Providing this onsite is preferred because of the increased transmission risk associated with transport offsite.
27. Six of the Auckland MIQFs do not have sufficient green space available onsite for returnees to undertake exercise outdoors while also being physically distanced from each other and the public. Of these, two MIQFs use large car parks on hotel grounds to provide for physical exercise. While well-ventilated, there is no access to any green space.

28. Returnees are currently subject to room restrictions on day 0/1 and from day 11/12. You will receive separate advice on these.
29. The other four hotels bus returnees to a site in Mount Albert for exercise. While the requirement for transport increases the risk of transmission this is being managed operationally. New operating procedures are in place for the use of the Mount Albert site, which include managing transport by cohort (ensuing that returnees at significantly different points of their isolation do not travel together), seating returnee by bubble and using a ratio of security personnel to returnees (1:6).

### **We are unlikely to be able to procure an MIQF that fully meets all criteria**

30. When looking at the criteria, the ideal facility would be a low-rise building or set of buildings on a secure site where rooms have separate bathrooms and private balconies or courtyards (to provide access to fresh air) and separate healthcare facilities. It would also have adequate ventilation, be able to provide catering and laundry services to those in the facility, and be located within an hour of a tertiary level hospital and international airport with good international links.
31. It is unlikely that we would be able to procure such a facility and may need to consider alternative options if should you should wish to ensure all criteria are met. One alternative would be purpose-build facility, although is not clear how quickly such a facility could be established or how much it would cost. At a minimum, a facility would need to be planned; consented under both the *Building Act 2004* and *Resource Management Act 1991*; have infrastructure provided; and then be constructed. Under current processes, this would take years.

### **Next steps**

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32. We recommend that you note that the majority of criteria are met or are being mitigated appropriately by all hotels. However, there are several – onsite exercise area and FENZ requirements – that are not met or require significant mitigation. Notably, the Grand Mercure in Auckland does not meet either of these two criteria. However, officials recommend that further and more targeted review on the suitability of facilities should be provided once the physical ventilation review is complete.
33. A full assessment of whether facilities are completely fit for purpose can only be made once the review of ventilation has been completed. It would likely take a small team at least six weeks to conduct onsite and paper based audits of each facilities.
34. The initial results of the ventilation report have been provided alongside this briefing [Health Report 20210455 refers]. Physical assessments will then be provided in May 2021.

### **Annexes**

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Annex One: List of 2021 Desktop Review criteria

Annex Two: Performance of MIQFs against desktop review criteria

Annex Three: Desktop review criteria that are not met or require significant mitigation

## Annex One: List of 2021 Desktop Review criteria

Criteria	
<b>IPC</b>	
1	People must be able to maintain 2m physical distancing on entry to and exit from the MIQF
2	Distance from operating international airport (Auckland and Christchurch)
3	Dual-use MIQ facilities have separate isolation and quarantine zones, ideally with separate hallways, stairwells, lifts, exercise and smoking areas (applies only to four dual-use facilities)
4	Separation of MIQF areas and those for long-term residents of hotels (Applies only to 3 MIQFs)
5	Separate room available for Health staff team, with hand-washing facilities
6	Secure room designated for PPE storage
7	Each room has individual bathroom
8	Surface materials can be easily cleaned in line with IPC guidelines (within reason – the facilities are hotels so there is a lot of soft furnishing and more porous surfaces than hospitals).
9	Working waste management facilities, including safe disposal of PPE
10	Access to sufficient health facilities
<b>Operations and security</b>	
11	Each room/unit must have a phone or similar device that enables a staffed station to be contacted 24/7
12	Complies with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) evacuation requirements and has Building Warrant of Fitness.
13	Site can be evacuated while maintaining physical distancing requirements
14	Site securable with physical barriers preventing undetected entry/exit (includes control of entry points)
<b>Wellbeing</b>	
15	Hotel has a smoking area that is separate from the outdoor exercise area (either physically separate or used at different times); must be large enough for 2m physical distancing; must be supervised by MIQF staff; people awaiting day 0-1 COVID-19 PCR testing cannot access area until they have returned a negative test.
16	An outdoor exercise area must be made available to residents for 1 hour a day, must be large enough for 2m physical distancing; must be supervised by MIQF staff; people awaiting day 0-1 COVID-19 PCR testing cannot access area until they have returned a negative test.
17	Outdoor exercise area is available on site
18	Rooms have window with natural light
19	Room size allows sufficient personal space for residents to move around (including children)
<b>Ventilation criteria</b>	
20	Rooms are well-ventilated and heated / cooled / have appropriate temperature and ventilation control, while meeting requirements regarding the spread of COVID-19
21	Rooms have opening windows







## Annex Three: Desktop review criteria that are not met or require significant mitigation

Criteria	Hotels that do not meet or require mitigation	Comments
Outdoor exercise area is available on site	Crown Plaza Auckland	There is a well-ventilated carpark and a foyer available
	Four Points by Sheraton Auckland	A carpark is available onsite for groups, and groups can be transported to a green site in Mount Albert for (physically distanced) exercise.
	Grand Mercure Auckland	A carpark and a smoking deck are available onsite, and groups can be transported to a green site in Mount Albert for (physically distanced) exercise.
	Ramada Federal Street	A well-ventilated carpark is available for individual exercise.
	Rydges Auckland	A driveway is available on site for single bubbles, and groups can be transported to a green site in Mount Albert for (physically distanced) exercise.
	SO/ Auckland	There is an outdoor terrace available, and groups can be transported to a green site in Mount Albert for (physically distanced) exercise.
People must be able to maintain 2m physical distancing on entry to and exit from the MIQF	Four Points by Sheraton	A range of mitigations are in place including: the closing of exercise and smoking areas; physical barriers, stickers and signage; staff supervision; briefings for returnees and staff; separated timing of arrivals and departures; returnees kept on bus until about to join entry line safely.  Temporary barriers are also used to 'close' the footpath and separate staff on arrival and departure
	M Social Auckland	A range of mitigations are in place including: the closing of exercise and smoking areas; physical barriers, stickers and signage; staff supervision; briefings for returnees and staff; separated timing of arrivals and departures; returnees kept on bus until about to join entry line safely.  Gates/fences are also used for buses that can come onto site.
	Ramada Federal Street	Ramada - Very limited reception area. Used for deportees. Only 16 at a time, across four to five vans. Slightly reduced spacing is required during briefing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On arrival NZPOL (Already traveling in vans) secure drop off point (DOP) and all pax move to briefing area outside entry point and best they can observe 2m spacing (slightly reduced, appropriate PPE worn)</li> <li>Each per processed one at a time into the facility, health check, documentation and move into room.</li> <li>At all times all movements of an individual is under CCTV and security guard until entry into their room</li> </ul> Process for departures is the reverse.
	Ibis Hamilton	In line with SOPs, returnees are managed through the check-in process along a line of crosses on the ground that are spaced 2m apart to facilitate social distancing. Once the check-in is complete they travel to their rooms via the elevators, bubble by bubble. On exit, returnees returning to Auckland via the bus are managed in a reverse pattern along the same crosses, and returnees departing the MIQF locally are released bubble by bubble either before or after the buses depart to avoid congestion in the hotel foyer. Once returnees are off the bus there is no occasion where returnees would end up within 2m of each other.  Entry/Exit for staff is managed at a single entry/exit location in the loading dock of the hotel. There is no cause for the entry/exit point to become so congested that 2m social distancing cannot be observed, even during staff changeover times.
	Ibis Rotorua	Arrivals and departures happen at different times. Allows for cleaning to occur between cohorts, arrivals, departures. Wait on the bus. Guided in bubble at a time.
Bay Plaza Wellington	MIQF-specific SOPs are in place for arrival, travel, departure and emergency evacuation to reduce confusion and minimise risk.  During arrivals, returnees are taken off the bus and guided through the MIQF into the arrivals processing area, and then to their rooms. They leave the bus in groups of 12 and after processing, returnees travel bubble-by-bubble through a one-way route (using the hotel's restaurant as a lobby as it is larger). NZDF observe returnees throughout the process, except during the elevator ride.	
Site can be evacuated while maintaining physical distancing requirements	Bay Plaza Wellington	During an emergency evacuation, two metres' physical distancing is difficult. Staff enforce distancing during exit as best as possible, then organised in distanced columns by room floor and bubble at the evacuation point. Note that the restricted size of the outside evacuation and heightened stress of an evacuation will carry risk of glancing 'bubble breaches' as returnees are moved into positions.
	Four Points by Sheraton	The evacuation assembly area is limited in size as it is on the footpath. However, NZDF hopes to close a section of Mayoral Drive with Policy support in case of evacuation.

Criteria	Hotels that do not meet or require mitigation	Comments
Complies with FENZ evacuation requirements and has Building Warrant of Fitness.	[REDACTED]	This building has no sprinkler system due to its age, and is a high-rise hotel (15 storeys). FENZ considers the evacuation plan acceptable for regular use as a hotel. However, FENZ does not consider it suitable for use as an MIQF because of the subtle differences in use as a result. [REDACTED] has previously indicated that it has accepted this risk.
	Commercial Information	This building has no sprinkler system due to its age, and is a high-rise hotel (15 storeys). FENZ considers the evacuation plan acceptable for regular use as a hotel. However, FENZ does not consider it suitable for use as an MIQF because of the subtle differences in use as a result. [REDACTED] has previously indicated that it has accepted this risk.
		This building has no sprinkler system due to its age, but is considered suitable for use by FENZ as it is low rise and therefore evacuation can occur in a timely manner without the need for sprinklers to slow the
		Evacuation point is not ideally located in a racecourse driveway, scheme on whole approved.
		Recommendation were not to use the [REDACTED] due to its lack of compliant evacuation plan. This has since been remedied. The most significant issue is narrow corridors and stairways in areas, which could cause congestion during evacuation. FENZ is satisfied that this has been mitigated by the inclusion of additional wardens to manage flow through the narrow stairwell.
Distance from operating international airport (Auckland and Christchurch)	The five Rotorua and Wellington MIQFs	The distance from international airports or MQ facilities means that returnees spend more time in transit, with a higher risk of transmission than in their rooms. This is mitigated to the extent possible through the operation of the transport.
Dual-use MIQ facilities have separate isolation and quarantine zones, ideally with separate hallways, stairwells, lifts, exercise and smoking areas (applies only to four dual-use facilities)	Grand Mercure Wellington	Isolation and quarantine zones are separated. With the exception of the initial movement from isolation to quarantine on returning a positive result, there are no shared lifts or corridors between isolating and quarantined returnees.
	Chateau on the Park	Returnees in quarantine are required to use the stairs, in order to avoid using hallways and lifts
	Commodore Hotel Christchurch	Separate lifts and stairs are not available. They are shared with maritime returnees. However, both groups are escorted to quarantine by nurses or NZDF.
	Sudima Christchurch Airport	Separated lifts and stairways are not required as the quarantine element of the facility is ground floor only.
Separation of MIQF areas and those for long-term residents of hotels (Applies only to 3 MIQFs)	Four Points by Sheraton Auckland	Residents used a separate, staffed entranceway and the staff lifts until February; in February the hotel terminated the access of the residents. The shop owner only has access to floors that returnees cannot access.
	Pullman Auckland	Long-term residents live in a separate tower with separate entranceway.
	Stamford Plaza Auckland	Long-term residents use separate floors to the MIQF; there are several empty floors between the two zones. Residents also use different lifts to the returnees.

Rooms are well-ventilated and heated / cooled / have appropriate temperature and ventilation control, while meeting requirements re: spread of COVID-19	This review does not consider ventilation criteria. The ventilation review considers the overall outcomes that these two criteria are intended to achieve.
Rooms have opening windows	