



## AIDE MEMOIRE

### Meeting with Minister Faafoi on Wednesday 24 February

<b>Date:</b>	23 February 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	High
<b>Security classification:</b>		<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-2511

<b>Information for Minister(s)</b>
Hon Chris Hipkins <b>Minister for COVID-19 Response</b>

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

<b>The following departments/agencies have been consulted</b>

**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 Withdrawn           |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**



# AIDE MEMOIRE

## Meeting with Minister Faafoi on Wednesday 24 February

Date:	23 February 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:		Tracking number:	2021-2511

### Purpose

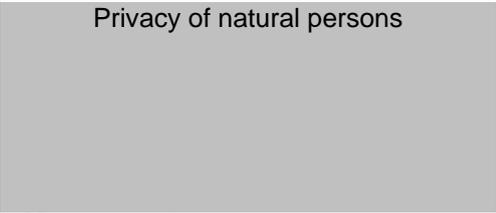
---

You are meeting with the Minister of Immigration, Hon Kris Faafoi, on Wednesday 24 February at 9:15 am. This paper provides background information and material for discussion on the two agenda items:

- group arrivals into MIQ
- time-sensitive entry by critical workers into MIQ.

Officials seek Ministers' feedback on our approach to these issues before progressing more detailed advice.

Privacy of natural persons



**Manager, Allocation and Supply**  
Managed Isolation and Quarantine, MBIE

23 / 2 / 2021

### Context

---

1. This meeting is an opportunity for Ministers to discuss two emerging issues for MIQ that cross over with the Immigration portfolio:
  - a. the process for group allocations (e.g. sports teams or RSE workers)
  - b. the need to accommodate time-sensitive travel by workers who will provide a wider benefit to the public
2. More detailed information on the topics for discussion is attached in a slide pack (**Annex One**) and a diagram showing the current and proposed process for group arrivals in MIQ (**Annex Two**).
3. If Minister's agree with the direction of travel set out in the slides, officials will continue to progress detailed advice on options in consultation with other government agencies in the coming days.

## **Annexes**

---

Annex One: Discussion slide pack

Annex Two: Managing group requests – current and proposed approach

## Annex One: Discussion slide pack

---



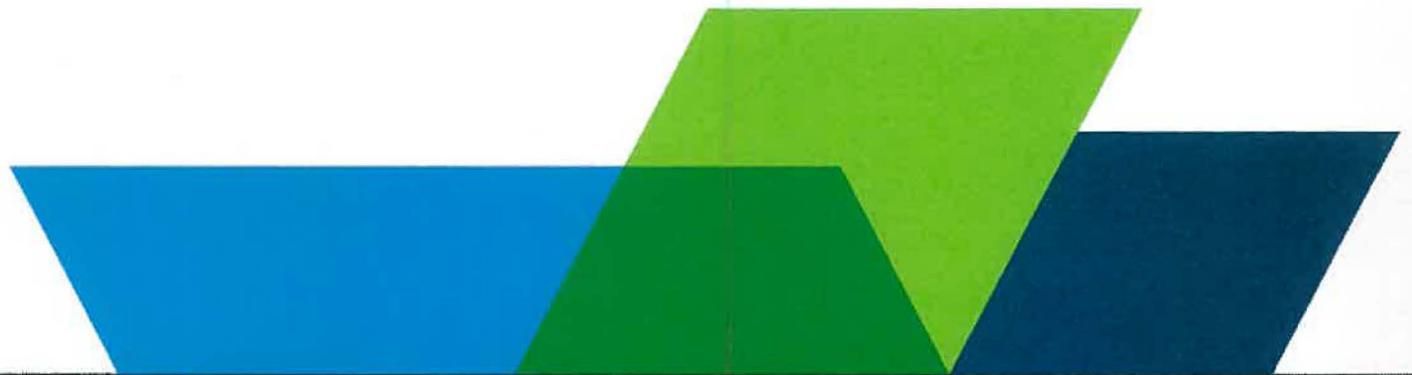
**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HIKINA WHAKATUTUKI

---

# Emerging MIQ allocation issues: discussion material

---

24 February 2021



# Background: role of Immigration and MIQ

Immigration settings determine which non-New Zealanders are legally entitled to enter New Zealand

- Work underway includes next priority groups for entry (e.g. investors, family reunification, more critical workers) and future class exceptions

MIQ settings determine when all eligible travellers can enter New Zealand

- MIQ has a fixed capacity that applies to all travellers entering New Zealand, irrespective of visa status (upcoming changes to MIAS will ring-fence 75% of rooms for New Zealanders)
- Often, travellers secure critical worker visas but cannot secure a timely place in MIQ

*With MIQ demand greater than supply, there is growing pressure on either (a) Immigration to ensure visa holders can get a timely space in MIQ, or (b) MIQ to prioritise between incoming travellers when allocating rooms*



# Pathways into MIQ for incoming travellers

Everyone entering MIQ requires a voucher, and there are three ways to obtain one:

1. **MIAS online booking** – Travellers secure their own vouchers online on a first-come first-served basis (around 4000 rooms per fortnight)
2. **Emergency Allocation** – Officials manually allocate vouchers ‘offline’ to individuals for mostly compassionate reasons at very short-notice (250 rooms per fortnight)
  - Applications are submitted online and assessed against public-facing criteria agreed by Ministers. There is a very high threshold for approval.
3. **Group Allocation** – Officials manually allocate 400 rooms per fortnight, at the direction of Ministers, where groups require additional MIQ support or bespoke arrangements
  - Unlike the first two pathways, this is not public-facing and groups currently do not specifically ‘apply’ for special consideration or group booking assistance.



# Emerging issues

## High demand for entry to MIQ has drawn our attention to two key issues with the allocation system:

1. Group allocations do not have a clear and consistent end-to-end process for decision-making
  - To date, decisions have been made on an ad hoc basis, through different channels, and often in isolation of the full picture of demand on MIQ from groups
2. There is no clear pathway for travellers entering New Zealand to carry out work on or by a specific date, which may have wider benefits to the public (e.g. Rocket Lab)
  - Emergency allocations mostly allow for compassionate travel at short notice
  - Group allocations tend to be for large complex groups, are approved by Ministers, and often require additional planning and support to manage risk or bespoke arrangements on arrival



# Proposed Group Allocation Decision-Making Process

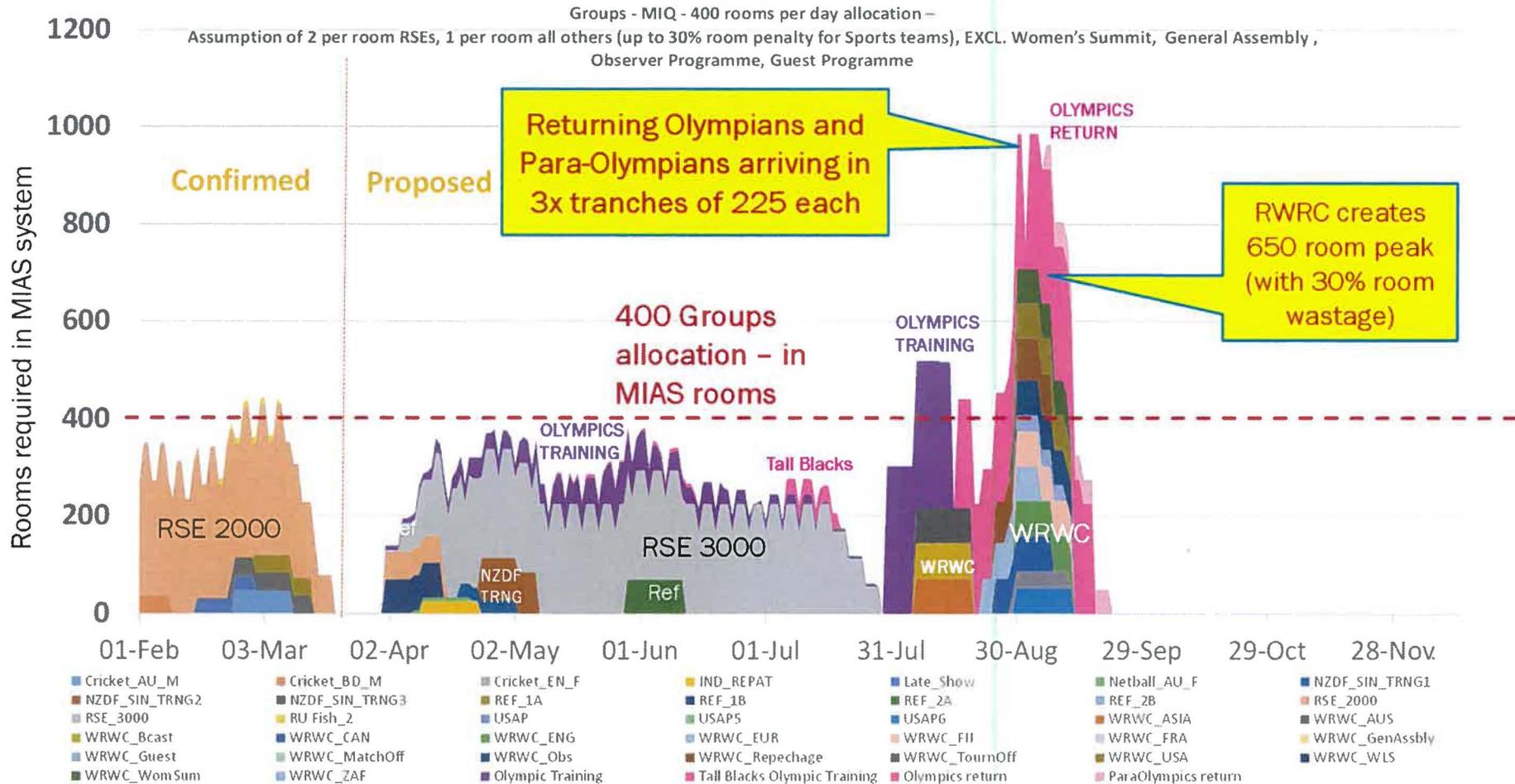
*Due to the subjective trade-offs that need to be made, and public scrutiny of manual allocation decisions, there is a case for a small group of Ministers, rather than officials, to make group prioritisation decisions.*

## A proposed solution

- MBIE receives requests for MIQ assistance from groups via a sponsoring agency
- Officials to 'weed out' ineligible/low priority group requests using agreed criteria and put recommendations to the Border Exceptions Ministerial group
- Minister for COVID-19 Response advises on MIQ impacts, health risks and operational feasibility
- Border Ministers prioritise and decide all 'group' allocations:
  - Looking 3-6 months ahead;
  - Weighing these demands against the needs of returning New Zealanders; and
  - Making any required trade-offs between sectors
- Advantage: Assists longer-term decision-making; allows us to plan further in advance and manage risk better, and establishes a clear process for all group allocations
- No. of rooms ring-fenced for groups is reviewed regularly to ensure the number remains appropriate.



# Upcoming confirmed & proposed group allocations



# Case Study – Women’s Rugby World Cup & Olympics

- The Rugby World Cup will need around 650 places between July and September, and the Summer Olympics and Paralympics require 984 MIQ places over the next 7 months.
- Many of these sportspeople will be seeking bespoke training arrangements.
- Combined, officials expect both events could tie up an estimated **20% of MIQ capacity** in August. MIQ would need to draw down extra rooms from MIAS to accommodate these groups, reducing room availability for New Zealanders.
- A dedicated project team would also need to be stood up in MIQ Operations to deal with the operational and logistical complexity.
- Given the scale of both requests and the expected impacts on MIQ capacity, resources and operations, we suggest that they are considered by the Border Exceptions Ministers’ Group to ensure all other demands on MIQ over this period are considered.



# Time-sensitive travel for critical work

## Officials propose creating a fourth pathway into MIQ

- This would be for people entering New Zealand to do work that creates, or avoids losing, a **significant public benefit**, has **no local alternative**, and **requires entry by a specific date**.
- Key design questions for the new process include:
  - how to prioritise who / what work is eligible
  - how to verify time-criticality of requests
  - who will assess and approve applications (i.e. MIQ or INZ)
  - how many rooms to set aside in MIQ per fortnight.

## Our preferred design would likely include the following elements:

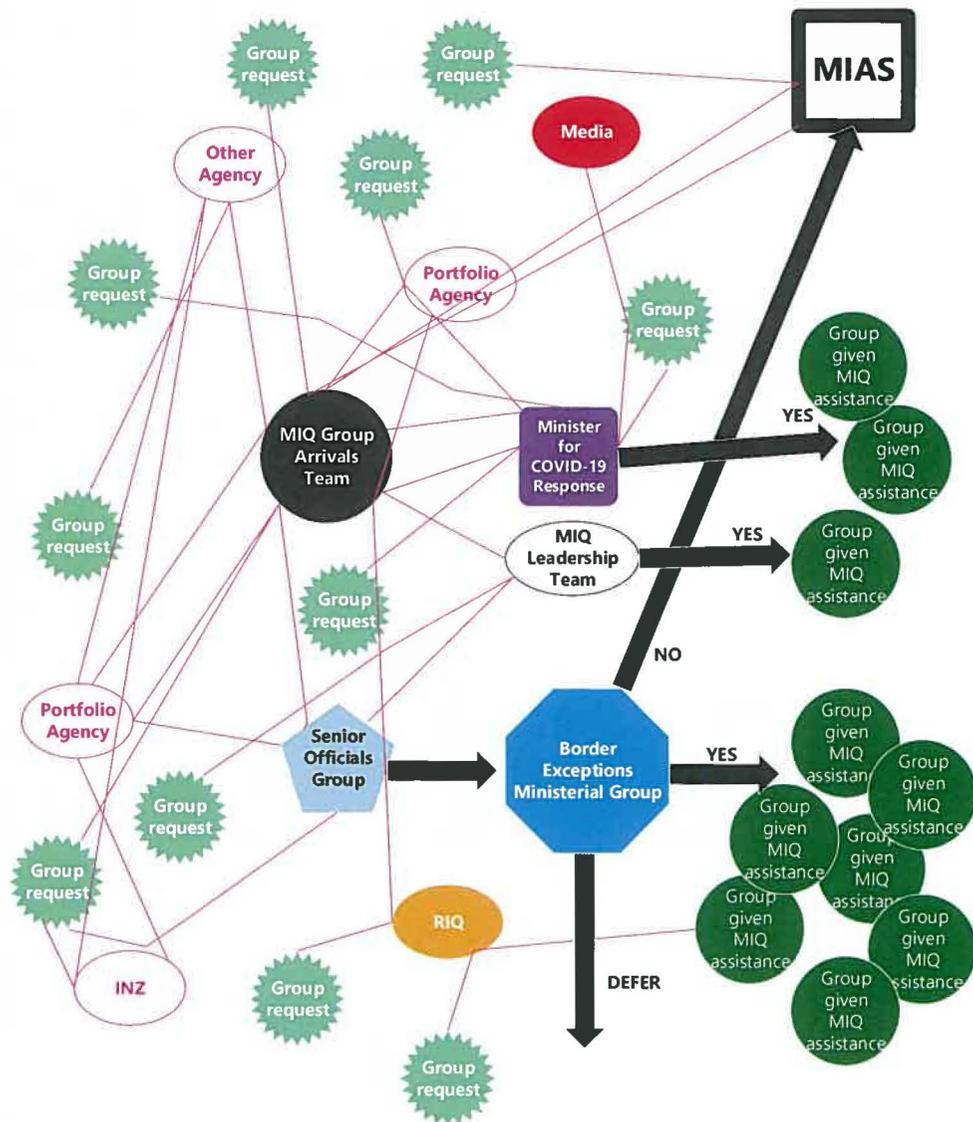
- Criteria to assess and allocate spaces
- Decisions made by MIQ officials separately to INZ visa approvals, to minimise change to INZ processes and capture the full range of time-critical cases (e.g. New Zealanders travelling for time-sensitive work)
- A small number of rooms set aside every fortnight (e.g. 50) from the 400 rooms currently used for group allocations



**Annex Two: Managing group requests – current and proposed approach**

---

## Current approach to managing group MIQ requests



### Key points:

- Ad hoc, short term view
- No prioritisation or decision framework
- No clear process for all groups - focus on class exceptions
- No view of pipeline of groups over longer term
- Groups receiving assistance can go over 400 rooms per fortnight allocation
- Border Exceptions Ministerial Group does not have remit for assessing all group requests for MIQ assistance

## Proposed: DRAFT End-to-end process for group MIQ requests

