



01 February 2021

Harpreet Singh Dhillon  
fyi-request-14368-a8b1f844@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: DOIA 2021-1245

Dear Harpreet Singh Dhillon,

Thank you for your email of 25 December 2020 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA), the following information:

- “1. How many onshore SMC and Talent work visa applications are pending in backlog? Can you please provide information about the number of application received each month?  
2. How long it will take to clear this backlog. Will it possible to clear it before November 2021?”*

#### **Our Response**

***Question 1: How many onshore SMC and Talent work visa applications are pending in backlog? Can you please provide information about the number of application received each month?***

Please see Table 1 below which provides the number of Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) applications in the onshore non-priority queue as at 13 January 2021, that are awaiting decisions, broken down by the month the application was accepted.

Table 1:

<b>Month Accepted</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>
Feb-19	1
Mar-19	1
Apr-19	3
May-19	2
Jul-19	358
Aug-19	635
Sep-19	618
Oct-19	647
Nov-19	695
Dec-19	709
Jan-20	557
Feb-20	905
Mar-20	773
May-20	76
Jun-20	1,278
Jul-20	492
Aug-20	80
Sep-20	194

Oct-20	64
Nov-20	67
Dec-20	39
Jan-21	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,213</b>

Please see Table 2 below which provides the number of onshore Talent Work Visa applications on hand as at 13 January 2021, that are awaiting decisions, broken down by the month the application was accepted.

Table 2:

Month Accepted	Work to Residence, Talent (Accredited Employer)	Work to Residence, Talent (Arts, Culture & Sports)
Aug-20	1	0
Nov-20	1	0
Dec-20	139	2
Jan-20	55	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>2</b>

**Question 2: How long it will take to clear this backlog. Will it possible to clear it before November 2021?**

This part of your request is not considered a request for official information. However, I can advise that while it is difficult to predict future processing times in the current environment New Zealand is in, it will remain a priority for the Immigration New Zealand (INZ) offices to continue improving the visa processing timeframes. These timeframes will however always depend on the complexity of an application.

The time taken to assess an application can vary considerably. This depends on the quality of the supporting documents and whether we require further information or verification of the information provided. We cannot confirm when an application will be decided. The immigration officer assessing the application will provide updates as the application is assessed.

Average processing timeframes for specific visa categories can be found on our INZ website at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/waiting-for-a-visa/how-long-it-takes-to-process-your-visa-application>

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, please contact Lautalie Leusa Vaa, Senior Business Advisor, Operations Support, Immigration New Zealand at [Lautalie.Leusavaa@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Lautalie.Leusavaa@mbie.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely,



Nicola Hogg  
 General Manager - Border and Visa Operations  
 Immigration New Zealand