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Tēnā koe Jamie

OIA request 22/23 0243 Request for citizenship processing timeframe information

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) requests received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 12 and 21 September 2022.

You requested, in your email of 12 September 2022 –

- 1. Wish to know the following data for paper-based citizenship applications made in Christchurch only for the said these months:
July 2021 August 2021 September 2021 and October 2021.
Total applications - Processed - Yet to be processed - Approved.*
- 2. in your previous response you have given me the information related to sep 2021 and october 2021 for christchurch based paper applications, none of the application is yet processed, thats so strange, means all of the applications failed the automatic checks? or you havent even seen those applications yet? and yet you are processing applications submitted in 2022, thats is so unfair. why such a delay in processing these applications? what are you doing to improve your system? when would you start processing the paper based applications submitted in christchurch in these months, please improve your systems and process oldest applications first.*

And in your email of 21 September 2022, you requested –

- 3. please provide the monthly data of paper-based application submitted in Christchurch from April 2021 to April 2022, how many of these are allocated to case officers and when? how many of these have passed automated checks? and those which haven't passed automated checks what queues are they sitting in?*
- 4. are these applications present in your system in electronic form or are they just dumped in the physical form in your office storage space for a very very long time?*
- 5. can you tell how many of your case officers are working on the paper-based application submitted in Christchurch in sep 2021 and oct 2021?*
- 6. whats the name and email of manager who is responsible for paper based application submitted in 2021, if you cant give this info, where can i get this information from?*

As advised in our email of 29 September 2022, as both requests are on the same topic, we took your second request to be an amendment, in the way of additional information being requested, to your initial request.

It was noted that any clarification or amendment of a request is considered to be a new request for the purpose of calculating the maximum statutory timeframe for response – see section 15(1AA) of the Act.

In response to your request, I can now provide you with the following information which has been broken down by each question for ease of reading.

Question one

Paper Application breakdown for Christchurch				
Month	Received	Processing	Unassigned	Completed
July 2021	73	3	0	70
August 2021	58	19	1	38
September 2021	16	0	16	0
October 2021	11	0	11	0
Total	158	22	28	108

Caveats to data-

- The statuses of the applications were collated at the date of 29 September 2022.
- The column ‘Completed’ refers to all applications that have either been Withdrawn, Declined or Approved.
- Applications within our system can be picked up by any citizenship trained Life and Identity Services Officer (LISO) in any office.
- As the data is extracted from a dynamic system, there may be small variances when compared with prior or future datasets.

Questions two and four

All paper applications are manually ‘digitised’ into our new system and put in the same queue as online applications, in order of date received.

A programme is then run to allow the system to automatically assess certain criteria. If the system is able to make this assessment the application is moved to a queue that requires fewer manual interventions by a LISO. If the system cannot automatically assess that a person meets these criteria, they remain in the same queue, where a LISO is required to do more work to ensure the person meets the requirements for citizenship.

The applications that require fewer manual interventions by a LISO are able to be processed more quickly, and by staff who are more newly trained, which is why some applications may end up being allocated earlier than others.

I can confirm that currently no paper-based applications are able to pass all of the automated checks. An example of a reason for this is that when a person applies for citizenship online they are required to undergo a 'liveness' test, that involves photos and short video confirming the person applying for citizenship is living. When people apply for citizenship on paper they are required to provide a photograph that is signed by a witness. The system is not able to automatically assess that the photograph has been signed, so requires additional manual intervention from a LISO.

However, I am pleased to advise that we are in the process of putting an additional queue in place, to enable the digitised applications to be able to be processed more quickly when the automated checks indicate that a person meets the criteria used for applications submitted online. I do note however that we do find paper applications are more likely to contain missing information, such as incomplete payment details, which can take longer to process due to the need for additional manual intervention, and will therefore be less likely to be able to be assessed using the automated checks than the online applications.

Question three

I must first advise that the portion of this question relating to '*how many of these are allocated to case officers and when*' is refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act. This is because the way this information is held means that it cannot be made available without substantial collation.

As explained in response to question two, no paper-based applications are currently able to pass all of the new automated checks. They therefore remain in the main queue, where majority of applications remain.

Please find below a table showing the total number of paper-based applications submitted to the Christchurch office between April 2021 and April 2022.

Month	Total received
April 2021	182
May 2021	230
June 2021	70
July 2021	73
August 2021	58
September 2021	16
October 2021	11
November 2021	44

December 2021	136
January 2022	46
February 2022	65
March 2022	92
April 2022	0

Question five

Applications within our system can be picked up by any LISO in any office, so paper applications are not necessarily processed in the same office they were submitted. This means that there is no number of LISOs dedicated to processing paper applications submitted to the Christchurch office. This portion of your request must therefore be refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act; the information requested does not exist.

Question six

I can confirm that the Manager of Services and Access, which citizenship falls under, is Julia Wootton and her email is Julia.wootton@dia.govt.nz. There is no specific Manager for paper applications submitted in Christchurch.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, the Department has decided to proactively release a copy of this response on the DIA website. All requestor data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available here: <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2>.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi



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