



25 March 2022

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dia.govt.nz

Daniel via FYI

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Tēnā koe Daniel

OIA request 21/22 0593 Request for Citizenship Ceremony Refunds

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 24 February 2022.

You requested –

- *In which area the Citizenship ceremonies cost is included and why DIA is not refunding the ceremony cost to the applicants who have not attended the citizenship ceremony during this Covid-19 pandemic?*

In response to your request I can provide you with the following information.

The New Zealand Citizenship fee is a set fee, regardless of whether a citizenship ceremony takes place or not. The part of the citizenship fee which is allocated to ceremonies is paid to local councils for running these events and are not refunded if cancelled due to Covid 19 level restrictions.

The cancellation of citizenship ceremonies due to health and safety regulations means that rather than attending in person, citizenship certificates are now couriered to recipients. Some local councils have chosen to hold celebratory events after people have gained citizenship, in lieu of the ceremonies.

The section of the citizenship fee which traditionally covered the cost of ceremonies is now funding a range of business expenses incurred by these cancellations. These include the cost of dispatching certificates, courier bags, labels, courier costs and the associated administration time.

The full fee is set out in the citizenship regulations as well as when the Department is able to refund a part of the fee: [Citizenship Regulations 2002 \(SR 2002/73\) \(as at 28 September 2017\) 18A Refund for withdrawal of application for grant of citizenship in certain cases – New Zealand Legislation](#)

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne-Claire Wyseur', written in a cursive style.

Anne-Claire Wyseur
Manager Operational Policy and Official Correspondence
Service Delivery and Operations