



12 July 2023

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Xiping via FYI

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Tēnā koe Xiping

OIA request 2223-0957 Request for Transparency of Citizenship process

Thank you for your Official Information Act (Act) request received by the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) on 14 June 2023.

You requested –

1. *Intellectually and honestly, do you think it is fair for the applicants of the unassigned applications? Or you don't care because it benefits the vast majority of the applicants (whose applications have been/will be approved fast), it benefits DIA statically, and this is what DIA cares the most.*

1410, 1177, 1094 applications submitted in Feb/2023; Mar/2023 and Apr/2023 respectively had been approved. However, 475, 848, 743 applications submitted in Apr/2022; May/2022 and Jun/2022 had not even been ASSIGNED to a CO.

**/ If the answer to the above question is "yes" (i.e. it is fair from your point of view, not mine). How can the current rules (on how the citizenship process works) be challenged (e.g. a petition)?*

/ If the answer to the above question is "no" (i.e. it is not fair). How and when will the current rules (on how the citizenship process works) be improved so it will be fair for all applicants?*

2. *Can the the citizenship process be more transparent (e.g., by contacting DIA, an applicant will know if his/her application has passed/failed automated checks, if failed, why, etc.)?*

If yes, how much more transparent will it be, and by when?

It is important to explain that the Official Information Act 1982 (Act) only provides access to official information that is held by an agency or Minister. The Act does not require an agency or Minister to create new information or form an opinion to answer a request. For these reasons I am refusing your request for information in question 1. Further information can be found on page six of the Ombudsman's guide 'The OIA for Agencies and Ministers':

[https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/oia-ministers-and-agencies-guide-processing-official-information-requests.](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/oia-ministers-and-agencies-guide-processing-official-information-requests)

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

Question 2 response:

The Department is further developing the Customer Centred Management Solution (CCMS) system to include additional features for tracking the status of citizenship applications. This 'portal status tracking' feature will provide an insight to customers for their 'in-progress' or completed citizenship by grant and passport applications submitted via the online portal. The expected completion date of this portal tracking feature is towards the end of 2023, and a go-live date will be announced closer to the time.

I acknowledge the frustration at the timeframes for citizenship by grant applications that require manual intervention, and the time it can take to receive a status update. Initiatives including the 'portal status tracking' will provide applicants the ability to monitor their own citizenship by grant applications.

Should you be interested, the Department regularly proactively publishes Official Information Act responses on its website, including information about citizenship by grant processing and citizenship automated checks. Responses have been proactively released with more information about automated assessment here <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Official-Information-Act-Requests-2> with the reference numbers 2223-0871 and 2223-0911.

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 its 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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Service Delivery and Operations