



13 October 2020

Ref: OIA 2021-0389

Phil Pennington
Radio New Zealand
Phil.Pennington@rnz.co.nz

Dear Phil Pennington

Thank you for your email of 19 August 2020 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *At what date did responsibility for MIQs shifted from the Ministry of Health, to MBIE? For all at once, or staggered (if staggered pls provide earliest date, and when most came across)*
2. *How many isolation/quarantine workers is MBIE responsible for as PCBU, and what jobs do they have and where?*
3. *What if anything from MBIE, prompted Worksafe move to assess facilities starting this week?*
4. *what regulatory work into health and safety has been ongoing before WorkSafe's intervention?*

What MBIE has done re its PCBU obligations re (what it has done plse, not MBIE's view on if plans are important etc):

5. *HSWA regulation requirement for health monitoring plan*
6. *Requirement for exposure monitoring plan*
7. *Provision of monitoring plan(s) to Worksafe in event of exposure – was the Rydges' exposure under MBIE aegis? Or any other exposure at any time?*
8. *Evidence of worker consultation in all of above plans, and any other Covid-related H&S activities by PCBU*
9. *Evidence that Worksafe is able to assess all Covid H&S measures taken by MBIE, independently from MBIE, since it is within MBIE – what structure has been put in place to ensure this?*
10. *Correspondence in the last week between MBIE and Worksafe about it beginning off-site and on-site assessment of the above, as per RNZ reporting - <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/423814/covid-19-worksafe-steps-in-to-ensure-safety-of-isolation-facility-staff>*

As previously notified, MBIE has partially transferred your request. Points three and nine were transferred to Worksafe, while points five and six were transferred to the Ministry of Health (MOH). I am satisfied that MBIE's Media and Communications Team has answered points one and two.

Prior to Worksafe's involvement, both the All-of-Government response and MBIE's oversight included several parts. Prior to stand-up for use as a MIQF, a range of assessments are done.



Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), owners of the locations used for MIQFs are obligated to conduct a risk assessment prior to accepting a contract with us to provide this service and accommodate arrivals.

A further Health and Safety Plan sets out MBIE's plans to manage Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Security at the MIQFs. MBIE has finalised this plan since your request was made. The Plan is currently being implemented and we will seek feedback from staff for a review at the end of October and update if necessary.

MIQFs facilities also need to have an approved and tailored evacuation plan based on infrastructure and resourcing. It is a requirement under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire Safety, Evacuations Procedures and Evacuation Schemes) Regulations 2018 for building owners to have an evacuation procedure in place that allows for the safe, prompt and efficient evacuation of a building's occupants, and building owners are required to maintain a means of escape.

Under the Regulations, Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), has a responsibility for ensuring compliance with approved evacuation procedures and schemes. As such, each of the facilities have been individually assessed by FENZ's Fire Risk Management Officers and advice on the safest possible evacuation has been given, with an expectation that there is an emphasis on safety and maintaining a separation between returnees/arrivals and the general public and first responders. Arrivals must be able to evacuate safely without mingling with members of the public or staff that they would not otherwise be in close proximity with.

On-site assessments are completed by the applicable District Health Board (DHB), the MOH and Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) officials, covering a range of issues health and safety issues. This includes ensuring there are appropriate spaces at each location for testing rooms and medical facilities, which is completed using a checklist from MOH procedures, and Infection Prevention Control protocols. A Risk Register is created, as well as a Standard Operating Procedure.

Finally, MBIE conducts a security site assessment, which includes the security manager, staff and myself, Air Commodore Darryn Webb.

While point five has been transferred to MOH, I can confirm that MOH and the local DHB's existing processes regarding testing and other clinical issues remain in place. Processes are individual to each MIF. Additional work done by MBIE is within regard to security, as noted above: MBIE manages the safety aspect, rather than the health aspect. MBIE is also currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding as a joint agency project. The relevant DHB monitors health checks.

I can confirm the specified exposure was under MBIE. The responsibility to report to Worksafe depends on who employs the staff member(s) involved.

As the Government's COVID-19 response was all done at pace, there was not time available for thorough consultation. However, I am able to confirm that safety standards were discussed openly with operations regarding any and all concerns. PCBUs were grown organically from staff working at MIFs rather than their senior managers. Due to the speed at which this was done, I am unable to provide documentation.

The emails comprising the communications requested in point ten are in the consultation process and will be sent to you as soon as possible.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



pp.

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