

20 April 2022

§ 9(2)(a)

By email: § 9(2)(a)  
Ref: H202204234

Tēnā koe § 9(2)(a)

### Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 21 March 2022 for information regarding managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ). You stated:

*“...I note that the timeline on the MIQ website references an early self-isolation hotel:*

*March 2020*

*New Zealand closes its borders to anyone but New Zealand citizens and residents. International travellers are asked to self-isolate. From 26 March, travellers stay at the Novotel Ellerslie for self-isolation.”*

Please find a response to each part of your request below.

*From 26 March 2020, travellers stay at the Novotel Ellerslie for self-isolation. I'm keen to understand the nature of that self-isolation and who used this facility.*

On 9 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that COVID-19 would become a quarantinable disease effective from 11 March 2020 with additional border measures coming into effect at 11:59 hours 19 March 2020. Only New Zealand residents and citizens (and their children and partners) were permitted to enter New Zealand at that time. From 02:00 hours on Thursday 26 March 2020, NZDT, every eligible passenger entering New Zealand was screened on arrival. If they had symptoms of COVID-19 on arrival, they were tested and placed in an approved managed isolation facility for 14 days and were required to remain there even if the test result was negative. If someone appeared healthy on arrival but did not have suitable transport arranged or suitable accommodation for self-isolation, they were placed in locations such as Novotel Ellerslie which had been approved for isolation for 14 days.

*Was it international travellers who were already enroute and had nowhere else to go?*

All people eligible to enter New Zealand were required to enter a 14-day period of self-isolation

*Was it under strict MIQ self-isolation rules - ie stay in your room, etc - or was it more of a facility to house people until they could return to home countries?*

During the initial period once a person was moved to an MIQ facility, within the next 24 hours someone would come to see them and to talk to them about what they could expect over the coming days and about what their needs are and provide them with further information about their stay. Over the next two weeks, meals were provided to them, and rooms were cleaned daily. People were allowed to do online shopping and have it delivered to them at the facility. MIQ rules were developed and refined over time as we learned more about the virus systems were developed and processes evolved.

*Do you know how many people stayed there, and what the management structure was? (Regular hotel staff, or external contractors/defence/etc?).*

As the timeframe has not been specified, we are unable to provide any details. The management structure was variable and evolved over time. Ministry of Health staff coordinated meetings twice a day with the nursing, hotel management, security staff and police to ensure they were across any issues and pass on communications to the guests.

*Also just wanted to check my understand that returning NZers didn't enter MIQ facilities until April 2020 - prior to that, NZ returnees did self-isolation at home?*

On 9 April 2020, the Director-General of Health issued an Order (then under section 70 of the Health Act 1956) requiring all people entering New Zealand by air to enter MIQ. As the date period prior to April 2020 has not been specified we will be unable to provide an accurate response

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā



Rachael Hopkins  
**Group Manager, Operations**  
**COVID-19 Border and Managed Isolation**