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# Government Response to the petition of Malkiat Singh

**Presented to the House of Representatives**

**In accordance with Standing Order 380**

**Government response to the petition of Malkiat Singh**

## Introduction

1 The Government welcomes the Petition Committee's referral of this petition.

2 The Government has carefully considered the petition of Malkiat Singh (a licensed immigration adviser): *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Residency Visa*.

3 The Government is responding to the petition in accordance with Standing Order 380.

## Request from petitioner

4 The petition which has received 144 signatures requests that:

> "*the House of Representatives urge the Government to remove the ballot system and the limit of 500 approvals per year from EOIs received after October 2022 for the Parent Resident visa to allow the family reunification of overseas-born New Zealanders and residence visa holders with their parents.*"

5 The petitioner's reason is stated as:

> "*I believe the Parent Resident visa category is cruel and makes people rely on luck instead of motivating them to focus on eligibility, hard-work, and entrepreneurship, which would ultimately lead to progress for all New Zealanders. In May 2024, the Immigration New Zealand website shows a total of 9,616 EOIs in the post-October 2022 ballot system. With the current limit of 500 per year for these EOIs, it could take years to be selected. I believe this is ridiculous*."

## Government response

6 The petitioner's concerns relate to the ballot system for the Parent Category and specifically, on the previous limit of 500 places per annum (of the 2,500 per annum cap) for selections from the ballot.

*Current settings for accessing the Parent Category*

7 The Parent Category enables New Zealand citizens and residents to sponsor their parents for residence in New Zealand. This supports skilled migration by making New Zealand a more attractive place for skilled migrants to settle with their families.

8 As a residence class visa, the Parent Category offers significant benefits to those eligible, including the security and certainty of being able to stay in New Zealand indefinitely, the right to purchase residential property, and access to publicly funded healthcare.

9 While the Parent Category offers significant benefits, the settings have been designed to mitigate likely impacts it will have on New Zealand's health and social services, and associated fiscal costs. This is largely done through sponsorship requirements and an annual cap on individual visas, currently set at 2,500 per year. There is significant demand for the Parent Category above the 2,500 cap.

10 Prior to the reopening of the Parent Category in October 2022, Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the category were considered in chronological order. When the category was re-opened, a ballot system was introduced meaning any new EOIs would be entered into a ballot which is randomly drawn on a quarterly basis.

11 To honour those applicants in the existing queue, on the reopening of the Parent Category, 2,000 places per year were allocated to the pre-October 2022 queued pool - to be assessed in order of submission - and 500 places per year were allocated to new EOIs in the ballot.

12 EOIs in the Parent Category's pre-October 2022 queue have been all but cleared. EOIs will be drawn principally from the ballot going forward, meaning there will be up to 2,500 places from the ballot each year from now as opposed to only 500.

*Concerns raised about the ballot system*

13 While current settings allow for more than 500 selections from the ballot each year, there are broader concerns about the unfairness of a ballot system which have been raised by the petitioner and others. Significant feedback has been received about the lack of certainty and clarity of a ballot system as opposed to a chronological queue.

14 Officials have been directed to commence a review of the Category's allocation system as a matter of priority, starting as soon as possible this year.

**Conclusion**

15 The Government acknowledges the concerns raised by the petitioner as they pertain to the Parent Category ballot.

16 While current settings allow for up to 2,500 places per annum to be drawn for the ballot, we acknowledge the broader concerns about the unfairness of the ballot system. The Government has directed officials to commence a review of the Category's allocation system as a matter of priority, starting as soon as possible this year.

17 The Government is committed to supporting migrants and their families. We have recently announced the Parent Boost visa, a five-year renewable visitor visa to facilitate family reunification. This visa provides a pathway for New Zealand citizens and residents to have their parents join them in New Zealand, including while awaiting a place under the Parent Category.

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

# COVERSHEET

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| **Minister** | Hon Erica Stanford | **Portfolio** | Immigration |
| **Title of Cabinet paper** | Government Response to the Petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident Visa* | **Date to be published** | 2 September 2025 |

| **List of documents that have been proactively released** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Title** | **Author** |
| July 2025 | Government Response to the Petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident Visa* | Office of the Minister of Immigration |
| 31 July 2025 | Government Response to the Petition of Malkiat Singh<br>LEG-25-MIN-0144 Minute | Cabinet Office |

**Information redacted** **NO**

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**In Confidence**

Office of the Minister of Immigration
Chair, Cabinet Legislation Committee

## Government Response to the petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident visa*

### Proposal

1 This paper seeks approval of the Government's response to the petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident visa.*

### Background

2 On 22 May 2025, the Petitions Committee referred the petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident visa* to me, in my capacity as Minister of Immigration, for response in accordance with Standing Order 380.

3 The petition has received 144 signatures and requests that:

> *"the House of Representatives urge the Government to remove the ballot system and the limit of 500 approvals per year from EOIs received after October 2022 for the Parent Resident visa to allow the family reunification of overseas-born New Zealanders and residence visa holders with their parents."*

4 The petitioner's reason is stated as:

> *"I believe the Parent Resident visa category is cruel and makes people rely on luck instead of motivating them to focus on eligibility, hard-work, and entrepreneurship, which would ultimately lead to progress for all New Zealanders. In May 2024, the Immigration New Zealand website shows a total of 9,616 EOIs in the post-October 2022 ballot system. With the current limit of 500 per year for these EOIs, it could take years to be selected. I believe this is ridiculous."*

5 The petitioner is a licensed immigration adviser.

### Government response to the petition

6 The petitioner's concerns relate to the ballot system for the Parent Category and specifically, on the previous limit of 500 places per annum (of the 2,500 per annum cap) for selections from the ballot.

7 Prior to the reopening of the Parent Category in October 2022, Expressions of Interest (EOI) were selected from a chronological queue. When the category



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reopened, a ballot system was introduced meaning any new EOIs would be entered into a ballot which is randomly drawn on a quarterly basis.

8 At the time the Category re-opened, 2,000 places per year were allocated to the pre-October 2022 queued pool – to be assessed in order of submission – and 500 places per year were allocated to new EOIs to be selected randomly from the new ballot, with the intent that once the pre-October 2022 queue had cleared, all EOIs would be entered into a random ballot from that point.

9 As EOIs in the Parent Category's pre-October 2022 queue have been cleared, future selections will consist principally of ballot EOIs except in instances of reapplication from the queue which are to be prioritised. This addresses the petitioners concerns about the limits on the ballot as there will now be up to 2,500 places per annum from the ballot as opposed to only 500.

10 This does not, however, address the petitioner's broader concerns about the ballot system the previous Government introduced. Significant feedback has been received by Immigration New Zealand and I about the unfairness of a ballot system and the difficulty it creates with no certainty or clarity about when, if ever, EOIs may be drawn from the ballot and invited to apply for residence.

11 While there has been an intent to undertake a review of areas of family-related immigration settings where concerns have been raised in 2026, I have directed officials to undertake a review of the Parent Category allocation system as a matter of priority in the context of these growing concerns. This work will commence later this year, and I expect a report back from officials on possible options in early 2026.

12 I am seeking Cabinet approval for the proposed response, as attached at Annex One. The proposed response outlines that:

12.1 The Parent Category supports skilled migration by making New Zealand a more attractive place for skilled migrants to settle with their families. As a residence visa, it offers significant benefits to those eligible[1].

12.2 Parent Category settings are designed to mitigate the impact on New Zealand's health and social services, and associated fiscal costs, largely done through sponsorship obligations and a 2,500 cap on annual places. This pathway sees consistently high demand above the 2,500 per annum cap[2].

12.3 Prior to the re-opening of the Parent Category in October 2022, EOIs were selected from a chronological queue. When the category re-

[1] Residence class visas offer security and certainty in being able to stay in New Zealand indefinitely, and come with significant benefits including the right to purchase residential property and access to publicly-funded healthcare.
[2] There continues to be strong demand for the category, with just under 10,000 Expressions of Interest between May 2023 and June 2025 representing over 15,000 people in the ballot.



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opened, a ballot system was introduced meaning any new EOIs would be entered into a ballot which is randomly drawn on a quarterly basis.

12.4 To honour the pre-October 2022 queue, 2,000 places per annum were assigned to the existing queue and 500 places were assigned to new EOIs in the ballot. As the queue is now all but cleared, EOIs will be drawn principally from the ballot going forward, meaning there will be up to 2,500 places from the ballot each year from now as opposed to only 500.

12.5 While this allows for more than 500 selections from the ballot each year, there are more fundamental concerns about the unfairness of a ballot system which have been raised. Significant feedback has been received about the lack of certainty and clarity of a ballot system as opposed to a chronological queue.

12.6 The Government has directed officials to commence a review of the category's allocation system as a matter of priority, starting as soon as possible this year.

12.7 The Government remains committed to supporting family reunification. The new Parent Boost visa will provide a pathway for New Zealand citizens and residents to have their parents join them in New Zealand while awaiting a place under the Parent Category.

**Timing of the government response**

13 The Government response must be presented to the House by 18 August 2025.

**Financial implications**

14 The proposed response to the petition has no financial implications.

**Proactive Release**

15 This paper will be proactively released (subject to redactions in line with the Official Information Act 1982) within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet.

**Recommendations**

The Minister of Immigration recommends that the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

1 note that, on 22 May 2025 the Petitions Committee referred the Petition of Malkiat Singh: *Remove the ballot system and limits from the Parent Resident visa* to the Minister of Immigration for response;

2 note that the petition requests that "the House of Representatives urge the Government to remove the ballot system and the limit of 500 approvals per year from EOIs received after October 2022 for the Parent Resident visa to allow the family reunification of overseas-born New Zealanders and residence visa holders with their parents";



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3 note that the proposed Government response acknowledges the concerns raised by the petitioner as they pertain to the Parent Category ballot system and outlines an upcoming review of the allocation system;

4 approve the Government response, attached at Annex One, to the Petition of Malkiat Singh;

5 note that the Government response must be presented to the House by 18 August 2025;

6 note that, once approved, the Government response can be presented to the House on the next available sitting day;

7 invite the Minister of Immigration to present the Government response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380; and

8 invite the Minister of Immigration to write to the petitioner enclosing a copy of the Government response to the petition, after the response has been presented to the House.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Erica Stanford

Minister of Immigration



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