



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Manatū Aorere



Consular Snapshot

2020/2021





CONSULAR AT A GLANCE



59 Diplomatic Missions

High Commissions,
Consulate-Generals, Embassies
and Representative Offices.



Responded to over
41,000
general consular inquiries



8200
notarial services,
including **4500**
authentications



68% of survey
respondents are satisfied
with the quality of consular
services



Provided consular assistance
in over **2700**
cases involving over **3400**
New Zealanders overseas



New Zealanders have
access to **24/7**
consular assistance for
emergencies anywhere in
the world



Responded to
36 offshore
emergencies



Over **1200** Safe
Travel messages were
sent to registrants



Over **680,000**
New Zealanders used
Safe Travel



SafeTravel website had
over **1.3million**
website views

Most common requests for assistance

- COVID-19 travel restrictions
- Financial distress
- Law infringement

Where most cases happened

- Australia
- India
- UK

A key role for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is helping New Zealanders be safe when traveling and living abroad, and ensuring they can access consular assistance and emergency advice, when required.

This snapshot summarises consular services provided to New Zealanders offshore from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. During this period, the demand for consular services returned to 'pre-COVID' levels, but the large majority of cases still related directly to, or were complicated by, the global pandemic. Case work shifted from organising government-led repatriation flights to finding solutions to consular cases complicated by global lockdowns, travel restrictions, flight disruptions and the ongoing demand for managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) spaces for those wishing to return to New Zealand.

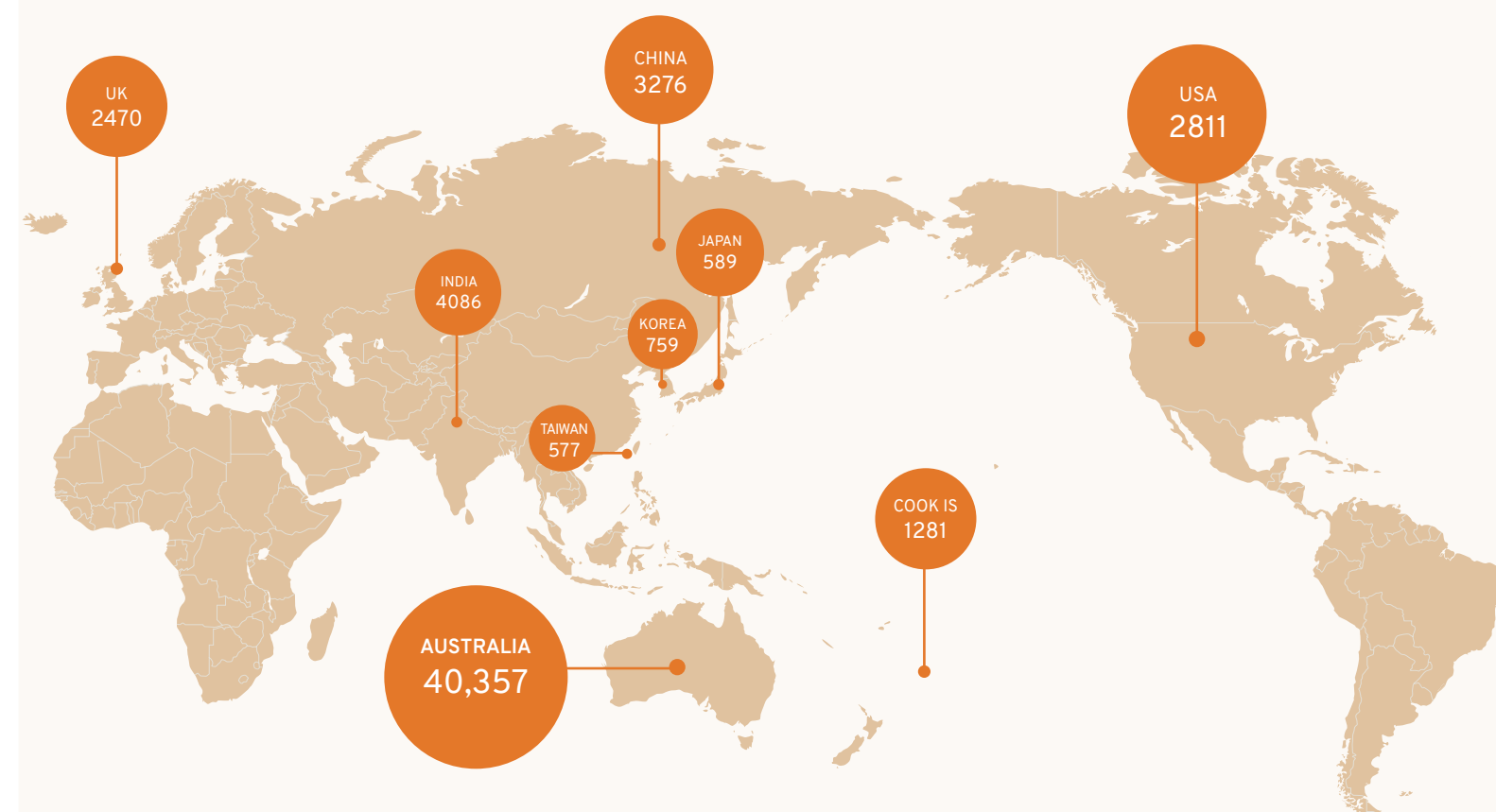
Consular staff in Wellington and offshore helped manage over 2700 consular cases (3400 individuals) globally, 977 of which were directly related to COVID-19. The average time required to deal with cases increased year on year. The number of general consular inquiries responded to was 41,000.

Work continued to ensure consular interests were taken into account in New Zealand's border settings (e.g. the introduction of Pre Departure Testing requirements, the Very High Risk travellers policy, vaccine certification) and managing the impact of these policies, and MIQ challenges, on offshore New Zealanders seeking to return. Contingency planning for, and engaging in responses to, COVID-19 outbreaks in Quarantine-Free Travel zones with Australia and the Cook Islands also took a significant amount of collaborative effort.

As major events have recommenced, such as the Olympic Games in Tokyo, consular staff have resumed contingency planning in a more complicated environment.

Despite the 'do not travel' advice issued in March 2020, that remained in place for all destinations (except for Australia in April 2021 and Cook Islands in May 2021), 146,973 New Zealand residents travelled overseas with 40,357 of those trips being to Australia. Overseas travel has, however, declined significantly from 2 million trips being taken in 2019/2020.

Where did New Zealanders travel in 2020/2021?



(SOURCE: STATISTICS, MAY 2020-MAY 2021)

What is Consular Assistance?

Around the clock consular assistance, to help New Zealanders in distress, is available from 59 locations covering 167 countries or territories.

Each consular case is unique and assistance provided will depend on the circumstances. Consular assistance can range from:

- response capability to emergencies involving New Zealanders overseas including a global pandemic, terrorist incident or natural disaster;
- helping New Zealanders who are sick or injured;
- assisting with arrangements following a death of New Zealanders overseas;
- undertaking welfare visits for those arrested, detained or in hospital; and
- providing notarial services, such as taking statutory declarations, for use under New Zealand law.

We have three main messages for New Zealanders travelling or living overseas:

- 1

REGISTER YOUR TRAVEL DETAILS ON SAFETRAVEL
- 2

CHECK OUR TRAVEL ADVICE
- 3

TAKE OUT APPROPRIATE TRAVEL OR LOCAL INSURANCE



STAFF AT EMBASSIES CAN

- ✓ Give advice, with the aim of helping you to help yourself
- ✓ Help with a lost or stolen passport
- ✓ Help you contact relatives or friends to request emergency funds
- ✓ Help you contact family and friends if you are ill or injured
- ✓ Provide a list of English-speaking lawyers, and help you contact family and friends, if you are detained or arrested
- ✓ Help with arrangements following a death overseas
- ✓ In certain circumstances, provide notarial services such as witnessing affidavits, statutory declarations and other documents for use under New Zealand law
- ✓ Help during crises, such as civil unrest and natural disasters.

For more information visit our [SafeTravel](#) website

STAFF AT EMBASSIES CANNOT

- ✗ Pay your hotel, travel or other bills, legal or medical expenses, or costs of returning a body to New Zealand
- ✗ Give you legal advice, including on family law matters such as child custody, international surrogacy and adoption issues
- ✗ Investigate a crime or get you out of prison
- ✗ Get you better conditions in prison or hospital than a local citizen would receive
- ✗ Arrange visas or work/residency permits for you
- ✗ Operate a personal mail service for you including through the diplomatic bag or store your belongings
- ✗ Compel another country to overturn your travel ban
- ✗ Become involved in commercial disputes or civil litigation
- ✗ Secure access to or administer vaccines to New Zealanders who are located offshore
- ✗ Arrange a space for you in a managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) facility.

1

Register your travel details on SAFETRAVEL

New Zealanders travelling and living overseas are encouraged to register their contact and travel details on SafeTravel. Registering means we can send important travel information and provide updates about emergencies, natural disasters, or terrorist attacks. SafeTravel registration is voluntary and all information provided remains confidential and is held in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

In 2020/21, over **1200 messages were sent to SafeTravel registrants**, down on numbers from the height of the pandemic but still three times pre-COVID figures. The messages provided advice and information to thousands of registrants on how to keep safe where they were, and alerted them to other important information including, when opportunities to return to New Zealand arose as well as other emergencies and natural disasters.

When there is an emergency, and an indication New Zealanders might be affected, we can respond by:

- ✓ sending messages to SafeTravel registrants;
- ✓ providing travel advice and crisis updates with news features on SafeTravel and social media;
- ✓ deploying staff to affected areas;
- ✓ assisting New Zealand embassies to prepare for emergencies by reviewing their contingency plans and providing any necessary guidance;
- ✓ liaising with families in New Zealand; and
- ✓ liaising with local authorities and networks.

REGISTERING ON SAFETRAVEL CAN SAVE TIME

A New Zealander headed out on a tramp overseas and registered on SafeTravel as part of their preparation. When they failed to check in with family after an agreed checkpoint, the family requested consular assistance. We advised the family to reach out to local authorities who subsequently were able to locate the New Zealander. The New Zealander was in good health but had trouble getting connectivity to get in touch with their family. At the end of the tramp the New Zealander returned home safe and sound.



2

Check our Travel Advice

The Ministry has an important role in establishing, updating and disseminating travel advice for destinations around the world through the SafeTravel website.

SafeTravel has a wide range of tips to help ensure safety when travelling in foreign countries, what to do if things go wrong, and how the New Zealand Government can (or cannot) help if you are in trouble.

SafeTravel advice covers security and safety concerns in 144 destinations. The advice is designed to help New Zealanders make informed decisions about travel destinations. We do not provide advice on all destinations. We focus on those about which we have reliable information on security and safety concerns that may affect New Zealanders.

The New Zealand government's official travel advice website is www.safetravel.govt.nz.

From March 2020, in an unprecedented move and reflecting the impacts of the global pandemic, a global 'do not travel' advisory was issued.

In April 2021, for the first time in a year, the travel advisory for one country, Australia, moved from 'do not travel' to 'exercise increased caution', in line with commencement of two-way quarantine-free travel. This was suspended in July 2021. The travel advice for Australia returned to level 4 'do not travel.' The travel advice for the Cook Islands was similarly lowered to level 2 'exercise increased caution' in May 2021 following two-way quarantine free travel commencing between the two countries. All other destinations currently remain at 'do not travel'.

The SafeTravel website had over 1.3 million website views. Our most frequently visited pages provided COVID-19 information, registering travel and the United States 2020 Presidential Elections. Almost 60 percent of SafeTravel users were either in New Zealand or Australia.

We regularly share updates on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SafeTravel.govt.nz/>) which has around 19,600 followers.

3

Take out Travel Insurance

We strongly advise New Zealanders to get comprehensive travel insurance before heading away. Travellers need to make sure that it covers everywhere they are going, and everything they plan to do. **"If you can't afford travel insurance, you can't afford to travel".**

New Zealanders who do not have travel insurance usually have to pay any overseas medical costs themselves, including the potentially high costs involved in returning to New Zealand.

Full comprehensive travel insurance can save you thousands: A kiwi overseas suffered a traumatic fracture and subsequently needed to return to New Zealand for hospital treatment and rehabilitation. Due to his condition, the New Zealander was unable to fly commercially and his only option was to take a medical evacuation flight to New Zealand, costing between \$50,000-\$60,000. Because he had medical insurance, the provider covered the flight costs to New Zealand and he received the treatment he needed.

It's always important to check the terms and conditions of travel insurance:

A New Zealander found themselves in financial strife when they travelled overseas for elective surgery. Whilst they had purchased travel insurance for the surgery it was not comprehensive. When the surgery did not go to plan, the financial cover was quickly exhausted. The New Zealander was personally liable for over \$25,000 for the lifesaving surgery they received following complications and rehabilitation. After many weeks of hospitalised recovery the New Zealander fundraised for an air ticket to New Zealand but will be repaying the hospital debt for many years to come.

Not having insurance can be costly: A New Zealander with a known health condition travelled to Africa without insurance. She became very unwell while travelling and required a lengthy period of hospital treatment. She ran out of funds and had no insurance cover. Her pensioner parents decided to use their small savings to cover the medical and flight costs to New Zealand.

Consular case breakdown

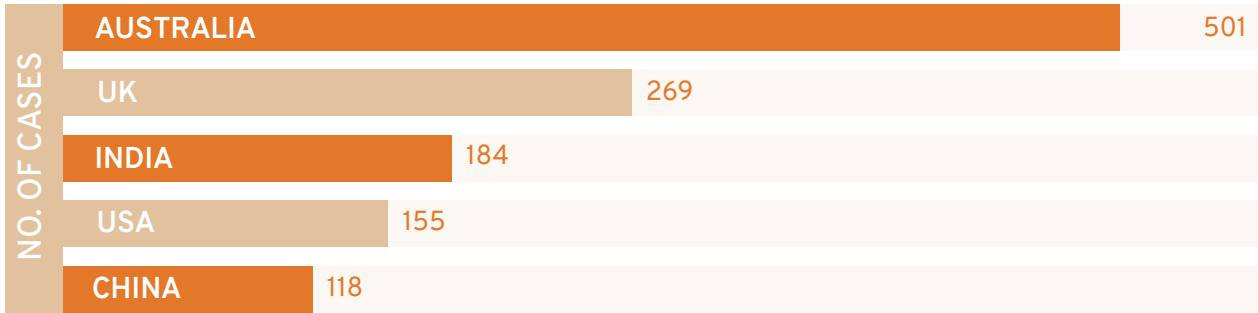
Most travelling New Zealanders never need consular assistance. Some choose not to contact New Zealand embassies even if they do get into difficulty. While the total number of cases has returned to pre-COVID levels, lockdowns and other COVID-19 related restrictions including flight disruptions have made finding solutions for all consular cases more complex.

The following tables summarise the times where New Zealanders have sought assistance and we have established a new consular case over the past six years.

CASE TYPE	NO. OF CASES	NO. OF CASES	NO. OF CASES	NO. OF CASES	NO. OF CASES	NO. OF CASES
	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Accident	15	37	41	26	30	20
Adoption	5	2	4	6	2	4
Behavioural issues/ Concerns	44	58	52	38	37	34
Child Custody	35	37	46	25	29	39
Civil Unrest	10	9	6	15	5	1
Civil/Employment Disputes	6	7	19	15	24	14
COVID-19 related	977	1360				
Death	229	244	265	182	186	159
Domestic Incident	21	17	19	19	16	19
Financial Distress	437	156	108	105	90	89
International Surrogacy	6	6	3	4	1	7
Invigilation	1	5	6	5	5	5
Law Infringement	258	318	291	245	201	158
Local Immigration Difficulties	202	237	272	228	200	215
Lost Property	107	428	591	543	548	645
Medical	113	193	269	209	179	164
Missing Person	22	44	47	58	42	37
Natural Disaster	3	7	4	23	2	8
Notarial Problems	15	17	12	12	14	15
Other	80	122	107	86	78	61
Passport Support/ Difficulties	51	111	194	171	196	212
Personal Safety Concerns	89	76	93	53	52	41
Scam	3	7	9	9	13	10
Terrorist Attack	0	1	1	5	1	5
Threat Warning	1	1	3	1	0	2
Victim of Crime	20	124	237	191	264	321
Welfare of Minors	13	18	16	7	8	5
Witness Marriage	0	1	1	2	1	3
GRAND TOTAL	2763	3644	2716	2253	2224	2293

Where consular cases happened

New Zealanders can seek consular assistance from our global consular network and in an emergency situation, around the clock consular assistance is available.



Top Consular Cases



COVID-19 related
977 CASES



FINANCIAL DISTRESS
437 CASES



LAW INFRINGEMENT
258 CASES

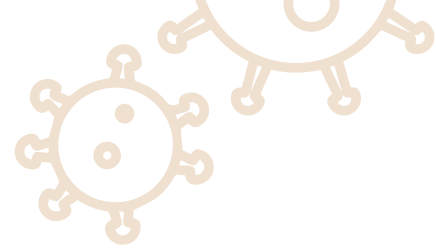


DEATH
229 CASES



LOCAL IMMIGRATION DIFFICULTIES
202 CASES

COVID-19 related cases



COVID-19 related cases continue to be the most common reason New Zealanders seek consular assistance. This is largely a result of the finite capacity within the MIQ system which is unable to meet the constant high demand from returning New Zealanders. The lack of funds, visa expiration and medical reasons are also contributing factors to the COVID-19 related cases. Most of the 977 COVID-19 related cases were in the United Kingdom.



UK
176



USA
62



INDIA
51



AUSTRALIA
48



GERMANY
40

Financial Distress



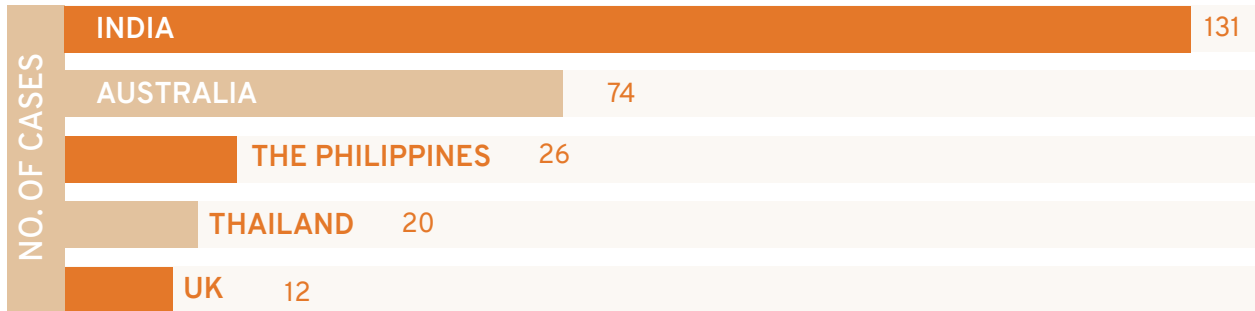
There is no automatic right for New Zealanders in distress overseas to receive financial assistance from the government.

If you do not have insurance, you are expected to pay any costs yourself. The Government cannot:

- pay your hotel, travel or other bills, legal or medical expenses or costs of returning a body to New Zealand or
- give you money.

Some New Zealanders who travel overseas find themselves in financial distress. We helped 437 New Zealanders, in the 2020/21 year, experiencing financial distress by:

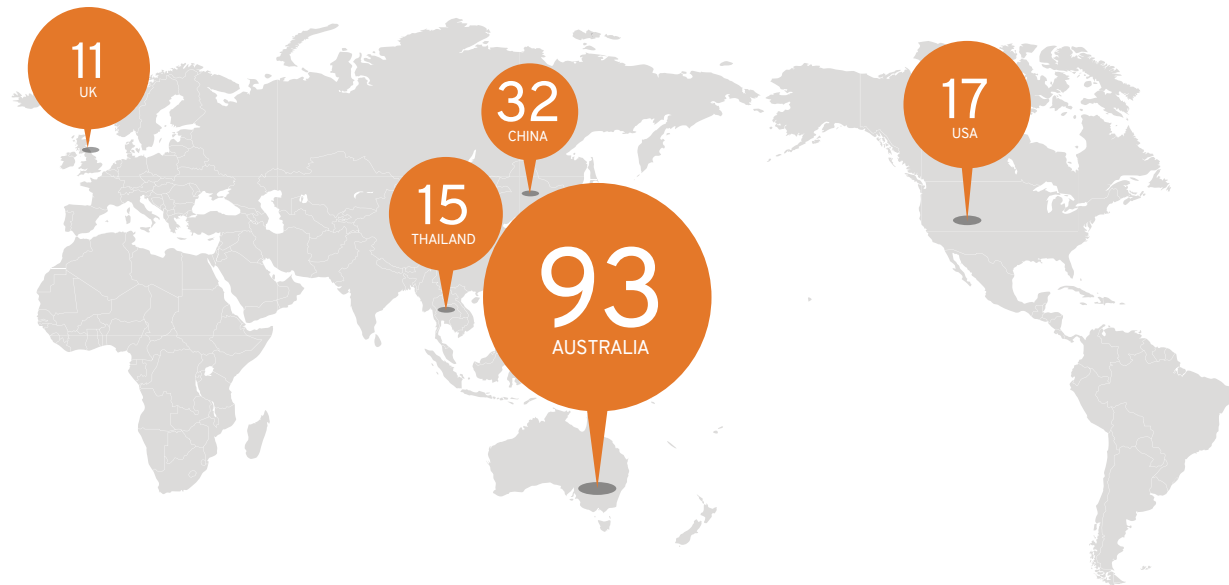
- contacting their family or friends to help with transferring funds;
- transferring funds through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade or via one of our embassies, when there is no other option, for a fee; or
- discussing other ways of resolving financial issues if none of the above options are possible.



Law Infringement



New Zealanders overseas are subject to the local law of the country they are travelling in. Local laws in some places can seem harsh by New Zealand standards, but New Zealanders are not entitled to special treatment compared with local people. The New Zealand Government cannot interfere in the judicial process of another country.



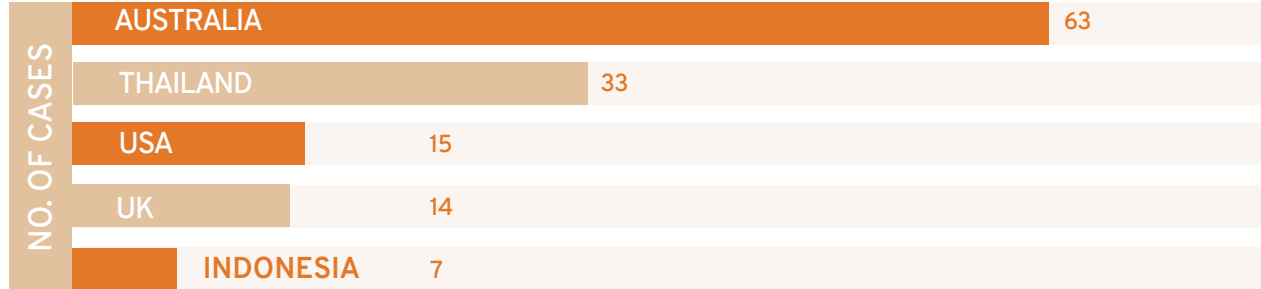
Deaths of New Zealand citizens overseas



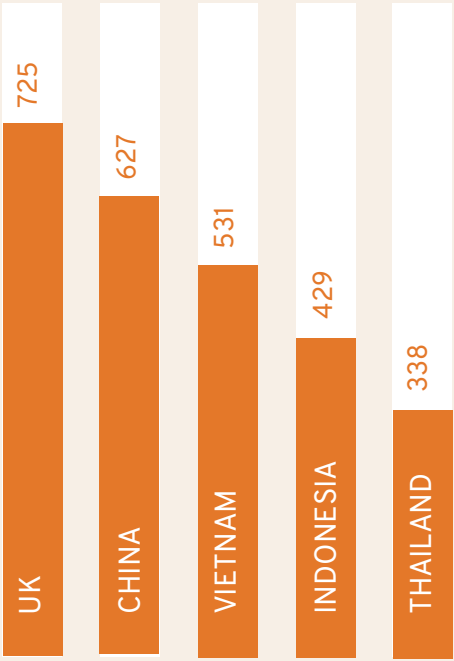
We supported 244 families involving the death of New Zealand citizens overseas.

We did this by:

- advising on what options are available locally, including whether burial or cremation was possible, and/or the repatriation of remains or ashes to New Zealand;
- advising on approximate costs of the options available; and
- providing contact details for local funeral directors who could managed the funeral or repatriation arrangements in consultation with the family.

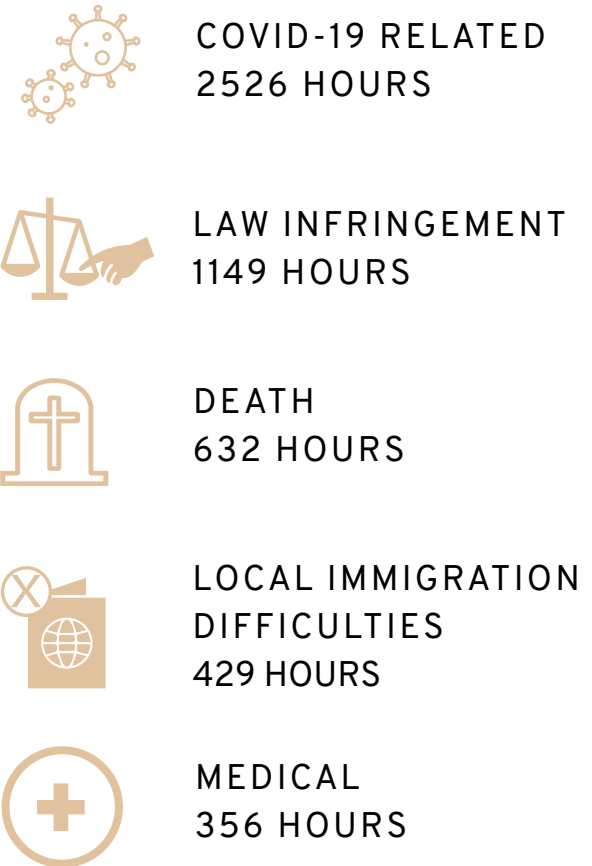


Time spent on Consular Cases



■ = NUMBER OF HOURS (NEW AND ONGOING CASES)

Hours spent by case type



Our busiest posts

Many of New Zealand’s Embassies, Consulate-Generals and High Commissions are accredited to more than one country or territory, which means consular staff may need to travel back and forth across borders to help New Zealanders in difficulty. Dealing with complex and ongoing cases requires significant time investment. Other cases can be closed quickly. Equally, some embassies may receive more enquiries than others and some embassies undertake notarial services more than others. The below graph summarises posts efforts including new and ongoing cases, notarial services, general inquiries and other consular work.

NO. OF CASES	LONDON	3144
	HO CHI MINH CITY	1114
	SHANGHAI	928
	WASHINGTON	928
	BERLIN	811

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A comprehensive set of MFAT’s 2020/2021 consular statistics is available online at www.mfat.govt.nz

HOW TO FIND US

Our consular staff in Wellington and around the world provide consular advice and assistance to New Zealanders at all times.

If you are in need of consular assistance, you can contact us:

- through one of our 59 locations around the world. Contact details for our Embassies, High Commissions, Consulate-Generals and other offices are available here: www.mfat.govt.nz/embassies/
- by phone on +64 4 439 8000 and ask for Consular
- by email at cons@mfat.govt.nz
- by filling in a form at www.safetravel.govt.nz/contact
- on Facebook www.facebook.com/SafeTravel.govt.nz/
- 24/7 Emergency consular assistance: 0800 30 10 30 (within New Zealand) or +64 20 20 20 (outside New Zealand).

PRIVACY

We value the privacy of people we give consular advice and assistance to. Any personal information provided to MFAT is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1993. Information we have received is only used for the provision of consular services. We do not share information with other government or private agencies unless it is necessary to provide consular services.