

Please also explain the reasons for the request and why an extension would be justified. Requests for longer extensions of time (more than 30 days) will require greater justification.

Please provide a timeline setting out the work already completed in order to process this request. Where an extension of time has previously been granted, describe the work that was undertaken during that extended period. *

The applicant's request was for:

'All records relating to the WHS hierarchy of controls used for employees working with depleted uranium and all records that detail the biological monitoring of these employees.'

The work undertaken to date includes consulting with various subject matter experts across multiple divisions of ANSTO to understand the scope of work involved, the type of documents available, type of employees working with depleted uranium and an appropriate revision to the scope. The business divisions include Nuclear Safeguards, IT, quality team, health monitoring and safety.

ANSTO is a small agency with limited resources for processing FOI requests. The role of processing FOI requests sits within the legal team which is a small team with a number of competing priorities. I am a lawyer in the legal team and FOI processing is only a component of my duties. At the moment we are processing 5 FOI requests.

What work is required to finalise the request? *

On 22 June 2023, during the practical refusal consultation period the applicant agreed to revise the scope of his FOI to the following:

'Records between January 2002 until January 2006 relating to any system of health surveillance, if any, of scientists working with depleted uranium during this period'.

The scope has changed from an unlimited period to a 4-year period between 2002 - 2006.

Due to the historical date range selected there will be significant work required to review historic paper records to determine whether any scientists may have worked with depleted uranium in the revised date range and the health monitoring documents in existence at the time. During the revised date range ANSTO had an on-site occupational doctor so it will be necessary to search historical records for the health center.

To avoid a practical refusal, I am going to propose the following reduced scope:

'For the period from 1 January 2002 to 1 January 2006, any procedure documents such as instructions, policies, processes relating to health surveillance of scientists working with depleted uranium. Excluding correspondence such as emails, letters, file notes and experiment specific records relating to health surveillance and actual health surveillance records.'

If the applicant does not agree to a further reduction of scope and wishes to obtain actual health surveillance records, the work involved in processing the request will be unreasonable.

Please describe the scope and complexity of the request. Please provide the number of documents at issue and the number of folios, as well as any complexity in the nature of those document *

The scope and complexity of the request is significant because it would be necessary to search through a number of historical paper records for the period of 2002 - 2006 to determine the specific health monitoring which applied to the particular scientist. Noting that health monitoring will be different depending on the type of work involved.

If the applicant agreed to narrow the scope to procedure related documents for health monitoring during the period, it would not be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Do other agencies or parties have an interest in the request? *

No

Please describe the measures that would be taken to ensure a decision is made within the period of the requested extension and to keep the applicant informed of the progress of the request *

I will continue to work with the FOI Applicant to negotiate a scope reduction and remove the grounds for practical refusal. If the scope cannot be reduced, I will be recommending the FOI decision maker issues a practical refusal.