

Jake Gerlach  
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**Request consultation process under section 24AB of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 due to the existence of a practical refusal reason**

Applicant: Jake Gerlach  
Decision Maker: Roslyn Hatton  
Date: 13 June 2023  
Organisation: Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (**ANSTO**)

Dear Mr Gerlach

I refer to your request under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) made on 18 May 2023 for access to the following documents:

- *all records sent to scientific staff that it is important to ensure pH meters are calibrated on a regular basis*

I, Roslyn Hatton, am an officer authorised under section 23(1) of the FOI Act to make decisions in relation to FOI requests.

I am writing to tell you that I believe that the work involved in processing your request in its current form would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of this agency from its other operations due to its size and broad scope. This is called a 'practical refusal reason' under section 24AA of the FOI Act.

On this basis, I intend to refuse access to the documents you requested. However, before I make a final decision to do this, you have an opportunity to revise your request. This is called a 'request consultation process' as set out under section 24AB of the FOI Act. You have 14 days to respond to this notice in one of the ways set out below.

***Why I intend to refuse your request***

In your request you sought documents relating to:

- *All records sent to scientific staff that it is important to ensure pH meters are calibrated on a regular basis*

I decided that a practical refusal reason exists because:

- Your request captures all documents including emails, letters, operating instructions, experiment plans, induction records, and manuals sent to any ANSTO 'scientific' staff member relating to the importance of calibrating pH machines on a regular basis.

- ANSTO has been operating since 1987. Throughout this time ANSTO has been involved in the development of nuclear science and technology. ANSTO's scientific activities include the use of pH meters.
- As a publicly funded research agency a large percentage of ANSTO's workforce could be considered 'scientific' staff. ANSTO's 'scientific' staff are employed in the following divisions:
  - Nuclear Safety, Security and Stewardship
  - Nuclear Science and Technology
  - Nuclear Operations and Nuclear Medicine
  - Commercial Products and Services
- Based on consultation with select scientific staff and staff members in the quality management team, I have been informed that documentation relating to calibrating of the pH meters on a regular basis differs between divisions, lab types, project type, and the type of pH meter used. In some divisions, the operating instructions of the pH meter manufacturer are used, in other divisions there are ANSTO controlled documents with pH calibration requirements which are used. There are also many different pH meters with their own calibration instructions.
- A search of ANSTO's Quality Management System has identified 7 current controlled documents instructions for pH Meter. This does not include controlled documents for Nuclear Medicine or the Synchrotron.
- The broad scope of your current request would involve searching for all current and historical documents (since 1987) across all of ANSTO for any document sent to a scientific staff member which relates to the importance of calibrating pH meters on a regular basis. These searches would be an unreasonable diversion of ANSTO's resources.

### **Request consultation process**

You now have an opportunity to revise your request to enable it to proceed.

Revising your request can mean narrowing the scope of the request to make it more manageable or explaining in more detail the documents you wish to access. For example, by providing more specific information about exactly what documents you are interested in, we will be able to pinpoint the documents more quickly and avoid using excessive resources to process documents you are not interested in.

For example, you may consider narrowing your request to 'current' controlled documents in ANSTO's Quality Management System in relation to the calibration of pH meters.

Before the end of the consultation period, you must do one of the following, in writing:

- withdraw your request
- make a revised request
- tell us that you do not wish to revise your request.

The consultation period runs for 14 days and starts on the day after you receive this notice.

During this period, you are welcome to seek assistance from the contact person I have listed below to revise your request. If you revise your request in a way that adequately addresses the practical refusal grounds outlined above, we will recommence processing it. (Please note that the time taken to consult you regarding the scope of your request is not taken into account for the purposes of the 30-day time limit for processing your request.)

If you do not do one of the three things listed above during the consultation period or consult the contact person during this period, your request will be taken to have been withdrawn.

**Contact officer**

If you would like to revise your request or have any questions, the contact officer for your request is:

Gemma Larkins  
Senior Lawyer  
foi@ansto.gov.au  
(02) 9717 9886

Yours sincerely

*Roslyn Hatton*

Roslyn Hatton  
Freedom of Information Delegate