



24 April 2024

Andrew

BY EMAIL: foi+request-11206-98a8b65b@righttoknow.org.au

In reply please quote:

FOI Request: FA 24/03/00439

File Number: FA24/03/00439

Dear Andrew

Freedom of Information (FOI) request – Access Decision

On 7 March 2024, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) received a request for access to document under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a decision on your request for access under the FOI Act.

1 Scope of request

You have requested access to the following document:

*Could you please update the list of Accredited Visa Sponsors for 2024?
It would be extremely useful for candidates if you might add to the export file such columns as:
Sector of activity | Amount of employees | Sponsorships offered | Sponsorships granted | Jobs offers link.*

On 7 March 2024 you agreed to revise the scope of your request to the following documents:

Indeed, I am requesting a current list of Accredited Visa Sponsors for 2024, and, if possible, it would be very handy to include in this list other useful information for job seekers. I would imagine some extra columns like: Activity Sector; Number of Employees; Sponsorships Offered; Sponsorships Granted; Jobs Link; etc.

2 Authority to make decision

I am an officer authorised under section 23 of the FOI Act to make decisions in respect of requests to access document or to amend or annotate records.

3 Relevant material

In reaching my decision I referred to the following:

- the terms of your request
- the document relevant to the request
- the FOI Act
- Guidelines published by the Office of the Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the FOI Guidelines)
- advice from Departmental officers with responsibility for matters relating to the document to which you sought access

4 Document in scope of request

In accordance with section 17 of the FOI Act, the Department has used its computer system to produce one document that contains information that falls within the scope of your request. The data produced in the document existed in the possession of the Department on 7 March 2024 when your FOI request was received.

5 Decision

The decision in relation to the document in the possession of the Department which falls within the scope of your request is as follows:

- Exempt one document in full from disclosure

6 Reasons for Decision

Detailed reasons for my decision are set out below.

My findings of fact and reasons for deciding that the exemption provision applies to that information are set out below.

6.1 Section 47F of the FOI Act – Personal Privacy

Section 47F of the FOI Act provides that a document is conditionally exempt if its disclosure under the FOI Act would involve the unreasonable disclosure of personal information of any person. 'Personal information' means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether the information or opinion is true or not, and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not (see section 4 of the FOI Act and section 6 of the *Privacy Act 1988*).

I consider that disclosure of the information marked 's47F' in the document may disclose business names which could reasonably identify a person, such as sole traders who use their own name as the business name.

The FOI Act states that, when deciding whether the disclosure of the personal information would be 'unreasonable', I must have regard to the following four factors set out in s.47F(2) of the FOI Act:

- *the extent to which the information is well known;*
- *whether the person to whom the information relates is known to be (or to have been) associated with the matters dealt with in the document;*
- *the availability of the information from publicly available resources;*

- *any other matters that I consider relevant.*

I have considered each of these factors below.

The information relating to the third parties is not well known and would only be known to a limited group of people with a business need to know. As this information is only known to a limited group of people, the individuals concerned are not generally known to be associated with the matters discussed in the document. This information is not available from publicly accessible sources.

I am satisfied that the disclosure of the information within the documents would involve an unreasonable disclosure of business names which could disclose personal information about a number of individuals.

I have decided that the information referred to above is conditionally exempt under section 47F of the FOI Act. Access to a conditionally exempt document must generally be given unless it would be contrary to the public interest to do so. I have turned my mind to whether disclosure of the information would be contrary to the public interest, and have included my reasoning in that regard at paragraph 6.2 below.

6.2 *The public interest – section 11A of the FOI Act*

As I have decided that parts of the document are conditionally exempt, I am now required to consider whether access to the conditionally exempt information would be contrary to the public interest (section 11A of the FOI Act).

A part of a document which is conditionally exempt must also meet the public interest test in section 11A(5) before an exemption may be claimed in respect of that part.

In summary, the test is whether access to the conditionally exempt part of the document would be, on balance, contrary to the public interest.

In applying this test, I have noted the objects of the FOI Act and the importance of the other factors listed in section 11B(3) of the FOI Act, being whether access to the document would do any of the following:

- promote the objects of this Act (including all the matters set out in sections 3 and 3A)*
- inform debate on a matter of public importance*
- promote effective oversight of public expenditure*
- allow a person to access his or her own personal information.*

Having regard to the above I am satisfied that:

- Access to the document would promote the objects of the FOI Act.
- The subject matter of the document does not seem to have a general characteristic of public importance. The matter has a limited scope and, in my view, would be of interest to a very narrow section of the public.
- No insights into public expenditure will be provided through examination of the document.
- You do not require access to the document in order to access your own personal information.

I have also considered the following factors that weigh against the release of the conditionally exempt information in the document:

- Disclosure of personal information which is conditionally exempt under section 47F of the FOI Act could reasonably be expected to prejudice the protection of third parties' right to privacy. It is firmly in the public interest that the Department uphold the rights of individuals to their own privacy, and this factor weighs strongly against disclosure.
- I am satisfied that if the Department were to release business names without that person's express consent to do so, it would seriously undermine public confidence in the Department's ability to receive, retain and manage personal information. I consider such a loss of confidence to be against the public interest, and this factor weighs strongly against disclosure.

I have also had regard to section 11B(4) which sets out the factors which are irrelevant to my decision, which are:

- a) access to the document could result in embarrassment to the Commonwealth Government, or cause a loss of confidence in the Commonwealth Government*
- b) access to the document could result in any person misinterpreting or misunderstanding the document*
- c) the author of the document was (or is) of high seniority in the agency to which the request for access to the document was made*
- d) access to the document could result in confusion or unnecessary debate.*

I have not taken into account any of those factors in this decision.

Upon balancing all of the above relevant public interest considerations, I have concluded that the disclosure of the conditionally exempt information in the documents would be contrary to the public interest and it is therefore exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act.

7 Legislation

A copy of the FOI Act is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>. If you are unable to access the legislation through this website, please contact our office for a copy.

8 Your Review Rights

Internal review

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to apply for an internal review by the Department of this decision. Any request for internal review must be provided to the Department within 30 days of you being notified of the decision. Where possible please attach reasons why you believe a review of the decision is necessary. The internal review will be carried out by an officer other than the original decision maker and the Department must make a review decision within 30 days.

Applications for review should be sent to:

By email to: foi.reviews@homeaffairs.gov.au
OR

By mail to:
Freedom of Information Section
Department of Home Affairs
PO Box 25
BELCONNEN ACT 2617

Information Commissioner review

You may apply directly to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) for an Information Commissioner review of this decision. You must apply in writing within 60 days of this notice. For further information about review rights and how to submit a request for a review to the OAIC, please see <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/your-freedom-of-information-rights/freedom-of-information-reviews/information-commissioner-review>.

9 Making a complaint

You may complain to the Information Commissioner about action taken by the Department in relation to your request.

Your enquiries to the Information Commissioner can be directed to:

Phone 1300 363 992 (local call charge)
Email enquiries@oaic.gov.au

There is no particular form required to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner. The request should be in writing and should set out the grounds on which it is considered that the action taken in relation to the request should be investigated and identify the Department of Home Affairs as the relevant agency.

10 Contacting the FOI Section

Should you wish to discuss this decision, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Section at foi@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Electronically signed

Lucksika

Position number 60016902
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Privacy, FOI and Records Management Branch | Legal Group
Department of Home Affairs
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