



Vincent Sheehy

Via email to: foi+request-11646-d736d1e7@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Sheehy

Freedom of Information Request LEX 51051 – Decision on access

I refer to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)* request to the Department of Social Services (**Department**) on 8 July 2024. The request seeks access to:

copies of the Department of Social Services Question Time Briefs (however described) prepared for the Minister for Social Services for 4 July 2024 and a copy of the Department's current index of Question Time Briefs.

I am authorised to make decisions in respect of FOI requests under subsection 23(1) of the FOI Act.

Decision

I have decided to grant partial access to the documents sought by the request as they contain material that is conditionally exempt under section 47F (personal privacy) of the FOI Act and access to that material would be contrary to the public interest.

The documents and my decision in relation to each are set out in the Schedule of Documents at **Attachment A (Schedule)**.

The reasons for my decision are set out in the Statement of Reasons at **Attachment B**.

Additional information

The QTB index (Document 1) lists brief QB22-000117 titled Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee. I have determined this brief to be out of scope of the request, as it was not prepared for the Minister for Social Services for the 4 July 2024.

Review rights and complaints

Information concerning how you may seek a review of this decision or make a complaint about the handling of this request is at **Attachment C**.

Publication

Section 11C of the FOI Act requires agencies to publish details on how to access documents released in response to FOI requests on their website within 10 days of release unless except where that publication would be unreasonable.

The documents released in response to this request do not contain any information that would be unreasonable to publish. As a result, details on how to access them will be published on the Department's disclosure log within 10 days of this decision.

Contact

If you would like to discuss any aspect of my decision, please contact me at foi@dss.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Sarah B
Authorised FOI Decision Maker

20 September 2024

Attachments

- A – Schedule of Documents
- B – Statement of Reasons
- C – Review rights

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
1	<i>Index</i> Question Time Brief Index as at 10 July 2024	<i>Release in full</i>
2	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000015: EIM and IM Support Services	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
3	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000012: Cashless Debit Card Abolition – Media Coverage	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
4	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000096: Future of Income Management	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
5	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000016: Funding for financial wellbeing services	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
6	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000019: Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity Review outcomes	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
7	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000062: Gambling	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
8	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000020: Industry Funding Model for Financial Counselling	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
9	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000030: Ceasing grants and measures	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
10	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000029: Seniors Connected / Be Connected	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
11	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000014: Support for Volunteering	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
12	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000017: Targeting Entrenched Community Disadvantage package	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
13	<i>Brief</i> QB23-00002: Closing the Gap	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
14	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000023: Individual advocacy funding	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
15	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000013: Systemic Disability Advocacy	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
16	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000105: Support for Carers	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
17	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000063: Supported Employment	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
18	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000064: Disability Employment	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
19	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000035: Disability Employment Services (DES) Quality Framework	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
20	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000075: National Autism Strategy	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
21	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000022: Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
22	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000014: Early Childhood - Pre-emptive early intervention pilots	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
23	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000021: Disability Royal Commission	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
24	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000032: National Disability Data Asset (NDDA)	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
25	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000004: Foundational Supports	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
26	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000033: Family and domestic violence filicide	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
27	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000038: National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
28	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000030: 500 workers	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
29	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000020: Consent and Sexual Violence	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
30	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000022: Prevention	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
31	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000051: AIC intimate partner homicide dashboard	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
32	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000021: Engagement with Men	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
33	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000007: Family, domestic and sexual violence investment – Northern Territory	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
34	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000030: 1800RESPECT	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
35	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000020: Leaving Violence Program	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
36	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000040: Escaping Violence Payment trial	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
37	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000110: Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Against First Nations Women and Children	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
38	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000026: Support for male victim-survivors of domestic violence	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
39	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000052: Calls for a Federal Royal Commission into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
40	<i>Brief</i>	<i>Release in part</i>

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
	QB22-000098: Paid Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Leave	Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
41	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000054: National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
42	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000100: Early Years Strategy	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
43	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000080: Safe and Supported – The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031 – addressing the over representation of First Nations children and young people in out-of-home care	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
44	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000043: National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
45	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000019: Savings from External Labour, Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
46	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000001: Disability Employment Services (DES) Star Ratings - Coding Error	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
47	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000056: Poverty and Inequality	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
48	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000089: Disability Support Pension	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
49	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000044: Employment White Paper income support measures	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
50	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000027: 2024-25 Income Support Budget Measures	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
51	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000024: JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and Student Payments	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
52	<i>Brief</i>	<i>Release in part</i>

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
	QB22-000023: Paid Parental Leave	Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
53	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000018: Child Support	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
54	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000015: Universities Accord and student payments	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
55	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000006: IT issues affecting the Targeted Compliance Framework penalty zone for working age payment recipients in Workforce Australia and Disability Employment Services	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
56	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000025: Portfolio Cost of Living	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
57	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000009: NZYQ decision and social security payments	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
58	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000115: Social Security System and Family and Domestic Violence	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
59	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000113: Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
60	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000052: Family and Domestic Violence Housing	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
61	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000013: Military Invalidity Payments Means Testing	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
62	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000040: Income Apportionment	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
63	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000003: Support for older Australians	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
64	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000067: Social Security Payment Accuracy, Debt and Compliance	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
65	<i>Brief</i>	<i>Release in part</i>

Doc No	Description of document	Decision
	QB23-000038: UK Pensioners	Section 47F – name of non-SES staff member; contact details of departmental staff
66	<i>Brief</i> QB23-000034: Robodebt	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
67	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000092: DSS Portfolio Election Commitments	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
68	<i>Brief</i> QB24-000024: 2024-25 Budget – Social Services Portfolio Measures	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff
69	<i>Brief</i> QB22-000034: National Redress Scheme	<i>Release in part</i> Section 47F – contact details of departmental staff

STATEMENT OF REASONS

Material on which the decision is based

1. I relied on the following material in coming to this decision:
 - the terms of the FOI request;
 - the documents subject to the FOI request;
 - advice from subject matter experts within the Department regarding the nature and sensitivity of the documents subject to the request;
 - advice from officers of the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (the Scheme)*;
 - the FOI Act;
 - responses from third parties consulted in the course of processing the request; and
 - the Guidelines issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (**FOI Guidelines**).

Section 47F – Personal Information

2. Section 47F of the FOI Act relevantly provides that a document is conditionally exempt if its disclosure under this Act would involve the unreasonable disclosure of personal information about any person (including a deceased person). Access to the conditionally exempt document may only be withheld where it is contrary to the public interest.
3. Certain documents subject to the request (as identified in the Schedule) contains personal information, specifically the direct contact details of departmental staff and names of non-Senior Executive Service level staff. I am satisfied that this personal information is not publicly available, nor are the individuals concerned well known to be involved in the matters described in the documents.
4. For the reasons above I am satisfied that disclosure of this personal information would be unreasonable and therefore is conditionally exempt under section 47F(1) of the FOI Act.
5. When considering whether access to this personal information is contrary to the public interest I acknowledge that access would inherently promote the objects of the FOI Act, demonstrating full transparency of government. However, providing access to this personal information would also intrude on the privacy of the individuals to whom the personal information relates whilst also not providing great insight into the decision making processes of the Department. This adverse effect outweighs any benefit that could flow from disclosing that personal information.
6. As a result, I am satisfied that access to the personal information would be contrary to the public interest, and have decided to withhold access to it.

INFORMATION ON REVIEW RIGHTS

You may seek review of this decision via:

- (a) an internal review; or
- (b) the Australian Information Commissioner (**Information Commissioner**).

Internal review

If you apply for internal review, a fresh decision will be made by a different decision-maker within the Department. An application for internal review must be:

- (a) made in writing;
- (b) made within 30 days of receiving this letter; and
- (c) sent to foi@dss.gov.au.

The application should also include the reasons why you think this decision should be reviewed.

If the internal review decision results in you not being provided access to all of the documents to which you have requested access, you have the right to seek a further review by the Information Commissioner.

Information Commissioner review

You can apply for the Information Commissioner to review this decision either immediately or following an internal review decision. You must apply to the Information Commissioner within 60 days of the receipt of this decision letter.

Further details on this process can be found on the Information Commissioner's website at <https://www.oaic.gov.au/>.

COMPLAINTS TO THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

You may also make a complaint to the Information Commissioner concerning actions taken by the Department while exercising its powers or performing its functions under the FOI Act.

Further details on this process can be found on the Information Commissioner's website at <https://www.oaic.gov.au/>.