



Our reference: 16/35359

09 March 2016

Jessica,

By email: [foi+request-1698-fb990b12@righttoknow.org.au]

Dear Jessica,

Freedom of Information Request 16-3

I refer to your request for access to documents relating to *Cardinal Pell* under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. This is a decision made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) in relation to documents within the scope of that request.

Background to the Decision

You have requested documents relating to:

- 1: *Any correspondence between Cardinal George Pell and victims of abuse in Ballarat Victoria.*
- 2: *Documents from Cardinal George Pell's testimony from the Royal Commission of Victoria in 1996 into victims of sexual abuse in Ballarat Victoria.*
- 3: *Documents from the Royal Commission on past testimonies made by Cardinal George Pell on the issue of child sex abuse within the Catholic Church.*

We received your request on *Monday 29 February 2016* and the 30 day statutory period for processing your request commenced from the day after that date. The decision is therefore due to you by **Wednesday 30 March 2016**.

Authority and Materials Considered

I am authorised under section 23 of the FOI Act to make a decision concerning the information you have requested access to.

In reaching my decision I have taken into consideration:

- the relevant provisions of the FOI Act;

- the contents of the relevant documents;
- relevant guidelines issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner; and
- relevant Tribunal and Federal Court decisions concerning the operation of the FOI Act.

Summary of Decision

I have refused your request for access to documents because the documents you have sought access to cannot be found or do not exist.

Reasons for Decision

Under section 24A of the FOI Act an agency may refuse access to a document if all reasonable steps have been taken to find the document and the agency is satisfied that the document is in the agency's possession but cannot be found or that the document does not exist.

The ACC has taken comprehensive steps to locate the document, having regard to:

- the subject matter of the documents
- the current and past file management systems
- the records management systems in place

Extensive searches of the ACC's electronic databases were undertaken by the ACC's FOI coordinator. No documents were identified in the course of these searches that fell within the scope of your request.

Having had regard to the specific nature of your request, I consider that reasonable steps have been taken to locate the documents that are the subject of your request. I am satisfied that the documents either cannot be found or do not exist.

Your Review Rights

If you are dissatisfied with this decision you can apply for internal or Information Commissioner review. You do not have to apply for internal review before seeking Information Commissioner review.

Internal Review

You may seek internal review by making an application in writing to the ACC within 30 days of being notified of this decision. A written application for a review should be sent to the FOI officer at foi@crimecommission.gov.au, or by post to:

FOI Coordinator
Australian Crime Commission
GPO Box 1936

Canberra ACT 2601

Information Commissioner Review

Alternatively, you may apply in writing for review by the Information Commissioner. In making your application you need to provide:

- an address for notices to be sent (this can be an email address)
- a copy of this decision.

It would also help if you set out the reasons for review in your application. Requests for review must be in writing and can be made via the website (www.oaic.gov.au), by email at enquiries@oaic.gov.au, or by post at:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
GPO Box 2999
Canberra ACT 2601

If you are objecting to a decision to refuse access to documents you must apply to the Information Commissioner within 60 days of being given notice of the decision. You can contact the Information Commissioner by phone on 1300 363 992.

Right to Complain

You may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner about action taken by the ACC in relation to your application. The complaint needs to be in writing and identify the agency against which the complaint is made.

The Information Commissioner may be contacted on 1300 363 992. There is no particular form required to make a complaint, but the complaint should set out the grounds on which you consider the action should be investigated.

Yours sincerely,



Shelby Simadas
FOI Coordinator