



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

FOI Ref: 1604-F1452
File No: 16/11973
Date: 20/06/16

foi+request-1857-dfe52d6e@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Smith,

Re: Freedom of Information (FOI) Request

Thank you for your email of 18 April 2016, seeking access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) to:

"1. Current social media policy of the department, which covers departmental use and/or private use by employees in an individual capacity.

2. Any current guidance material which is available for employees to make informed decisions about their private social media use."

In addition, in your email of 21 May 2016, you limited the scope of part 2 of your request to:

"any 'case studies' or 'examples' given to staff which address the topic of private use of social media."

In your email of 21 May 2016, you requested a waiver of the charges associated with the processing of your request. I am the decision-maker with respect to processing charges authorised in accordance with the provisions of Section 23(1) of the FOI Act. I am writing to inform you that I have decided not to reduce or waive the charges.

Please note that at this stage in the FOI process, no decision has been made as to whether the information you seek will be released or exempt under the provisions of the FOI Act. My decision relates only to the processing charges.

Reasons for my decision – Public Interest Grounds

In considering your application to waive charges on public interest grounds in accordance with Section 29 of the FOI Act, I have taken into account whether the giving of access to the documents is *in* the public interest, as opposed to being *of* public interest.

I have considered the general question as to whether the benefit from the release of the information contained in the particular documents will flow to the public at large, or a substantial section of the public.

In considering your request, I have had regard to whether the disclosure would advance the objects of the FOI Act, which include promoting better informed decision making, and increasing scrutiny, discussion, comment and review of the Government's activities. I note that in this case, the matter that is the subject of the request is not one concerning an administrative decision and therefore disclosure of the documents will not enhance administrative decision making. Although this material may be of interest to you and to some other members of the public, I am of the view that it would not make any material contribution to informing public discussion and commentary. For this reason I am over the opinion, the giving of access to these documents would not be in the general public interest, nor in the interest of a substantial section of the public.

Therefore, in accordance with section 29 of the FOI Act I have decided that the original charge of \$57.22 should stand in relation to your request.

Charges in the FOI Act are a vital component of the FOI regime which makes it sustainable and appropriately balanced from a public policy perspective. Significant time and cost to the Australian community is attributable to processing FOI requests. The processing charges are designed to ensure that the Australian community recoups a fair proportion of the costs of processing non-personal FOI requests, given that processing such requests diverts significant community resources away from other key community priorities.

If you agree to pay the charge you may lodge payment by cheque, or money order made payable to 'The National Cashier – DFAT' to

Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R G Casey Building
John McEwan Crescent
BARTON ACT 0221

Your review rights

Internal review

Under the provisions of section 54 of the FOI Act, you are entitled to request a review of my decision. Your request should be directed to:

Director
Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R G Casey Building
John McEwan Crescent
BARTON ACT 0221

Australian Information Commissioner

Under the provisions of section 54 of the FOI Act, you are entitled to request a review by the Australian Information Commissioner of my decision. You may also make a complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner under section 70 on the Department's performance of its functions or the exercise of power under the FOI Act.

Your request for review or complaint should be directed to:

GPO Box 2999, Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: 1300 363 992

Fax: (02) 9284 9666

Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au

Complaints to the Commonwealth Ombudsman

You may complain to the Ombudsman concerning actions taken by an agency in the exercise of its powers or, more specifically, the performance of its functions under the FOI Act. There is no fee for making a complaint. The Ombudsman will conduct an independent investigation of your complaint.

You may complain to the Ombudsman by calling or writing to:

Commonwealth Ombudsman

GPO Box 442

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: 1300 362 072

Fax: (02) 6249 7829

Should you have any queries regarding this matter please contact your FOI case officer, Holly Kendall, on (02) 6261 1111.

Yours sincerely



Marie-Charlotte McKenna

Director

Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

☐ **Payment of Charges: (Deposit / In Full)**

For the sum of \$57.22 as detailed in the FOI Estimate of Charges letter dated 19 May 2016 (FOI ref: 1604-F1452)

Credit Card Payment for Freedom of Information (FOI) Charges

Name _____
Address _____

I authorise the National Cashier of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to debit my

☐ VISA ☐ MASTER CARD

- - - Expiry: ____/____

Name appearing on card _____

Signature: _____

Payment by Direct Debit

Account Name: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
BSB No.: 092-009
Account No.: 110329

Please include your surname and 'FOI' in the reference field.