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FOI ref: 201617/10

James Smith

e-mail: foi+request-2108-4433dc6e@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Smith

RE: YOUR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

On 1 September 2016 the ABS provided you with an estimate of charges for your FOI request dated 8 August 2016. The ABS stated that the total cost of the request would be \$295.00, and that a deposit of \$73.75 was required before work was commenced on your request.

I refer to your e-mail dated 2 September 2016, in which you requested that the ABS not impose any charge for your request. (Attachment A)

After reviewing your request, I have decided to waive all charges associated with it. It is my opinion that given the high level of public debate that occurred around the retention of names and addresses collected in the Census, the request to see the supporting evidence for a public statement made by the Statistician in relation this issue meets the public interest test.

The ABS will now commence work on your request dated 8 August 2016, and will provide a response to you by 10 October 2016.

Yours sincerely

Denise Carlton
Program Manager
Functional and Efficiency Review Secretariat
Australian Bureau of Statistics

4 October 2016

Attachment A

Dear Ms Williams,

Thank you for your letter (your reference 201617/10) dated 1 September 2016.

I contend that the charges have been wrongly assessed and should be either reduced or not imposed.

The Australian Statistician has made a public statement "we know that if people supply their name they're more likely to provide accurate information in the other parts of the census." In doing so, one would imagine that such a statement would only be made if it were true and supported in fact.

It follows then that the Statistician's source of supporting evidence should be readily accessible within a very short period of time, even if that means asking the Statistician himself where he obtained supporting evidence in making his claim. A search time of 5 hours therefore appears manifestly excessive.

I understand the ABS undertakes a wide variety of research. If research supporting the Statistician's claim exists, I imagine that it would have been stored in appropriate manner and therefore ready accessible by searching the catalogues or other information management tools the ABS uses to manage its information.

I kindly ask the Bureau to not impose any charge for this request. If a charge is to be imposed, I will need to employ the services of a crowd-funding website.

Yours sincerely,

James Smith