



19 January 2017

Our reference: LEX 24850

Mr Brendan Molloy  
Right to Know

By email: [foi+request-2887-8532b46e@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-2887-8532b46e@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Mr Molloy

### **Acknowledgement of your Freedom of Information Request**

I refer to your request, dated 28 December 2016 and received by the Department of Human Services (the **department**) on the same date for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the **FOI Act**) to the following documents:

'Recently there has been a public furore about the seemingly automated delivery of debt notices to persons receiving benefits from Centrelink programmes since early December, and perhaps earlier[1].

I hereby request, under the Freedom of Information Act 1982, copies of the following documents:

- 1) Technical reports or similar documents regarding known errors or probable risks from introducing the new "compliance system";
- 2) Documents outlining the data sources used in the new "compliance system";
- 3) Documents listing the number of debt recovery requests sent on a monthly basis (or similar) from January 2016 to the date of receipt of this request; and
- 4) An aggregate number of reported complaints from when the system was introduced relating to false or miscalculated debt recovery requests.'

On 11 January 2017, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner advised you that they had decided to grant the department an extension of time to process your request. The due date for your request was, with that extension, 11 February 2017.

The processing time was suspended during a period of consultation under section 24AB. As this consultation occurred, you can now expect a decision from us by **17 February 2017**.

You revised your request to the following documents:

"Compliance system" refers to the DHS system that incorporates handling overpayment debt recovery communications for Centrelink clients.

- 1) Parts of final reports or similar documents relating to known errors and risks relating to the most recent iteration of "compliance system" that is currently in production;
- 2) Documents summarising or outlining the data sources used in the new "compliance system";
- 3) Documents listing the number of debt recovery requests sent on a monthly basis (or similar) from January 2016 to the date of receipt of this request; and
- 4) An aggregate number of reported complaints from when the system was introduced relating to false or miscalculated debt recovery requests.

The above parts should not contain:

- a) Publicly available documents;
- b) Documents intended for consumption by the media (such as press releases);
- c) Draft documents; nor
- d) Documents relating to issues no longer relevant to the "compliance system" in production

Further context:

Part 1 of the request should ideally only be part of a single technical report as would be consistent with the approach taken by private industry on software projects. These documents should detail any known defects and risks and should not duplicate any content of other documents where possible to limit scope and processing.

Part 2 should simply provide as few documents as possible that outline which data sources are used in the compliance system identified in Part 1. This could be as simple as a spreadsheet identifying what data is used and which department, database, or other organisation the data is supplied from. Any documents sufficient to provide a complete overview of the data sources available is sufficient for this part, and no further effort should be undertaken if possible'.

The processing time may be extended if we need to consult third parties or for other reasons. We will advise you if this happens.

### **Charges**

The department will advise you if a charge is payable to process your request and the amount of any such charge as soon as practicable. No charge is payable for providing a person with their own personal information.

### **Your Address**

The FOI Act requires that you provide us with an address which we can send notices to. You have advised your electronic address is [foi+request-2887-8532b46e@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-2887-8532b46e@righttoknow.org.au). We will send all notices and correspondence to this address. Please advise us as soon as possible if you wish correspondence to be sent to another address or if your address changes. If you do not advise us of changes to your address, correspondence and notices will continue to be sent to the address specified above.

## **Disclosure Log**

Please note that information released under FOI Act may be published in a disclosure log on the department's website. Section 11C of the FOI Act requires this publication, however it is subject to certain exceptions, including where publication of personal, business, professional or commercial information would be unreasonable.

## **Exclusion of junior departmental employee details**

The department is working towards ensuring that all employees have a choice about whether they provide their full name, personal logon identifiers and direct contact details in response to public enquiries. Where such details are included in the scope of a request, this may add to processing time and applicable charges as it may be necessary to consider whether the details are exempt under the FOI Act. On this basis, unless you tell us otherwise, we will assume that these details are out of scope of your request and they will be redacted under section 22 of the FOI Act.

## **Further assistance**

If you have any questions please email [FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Authorised FOI Decision Maker  
Freedom of Information Team  
FOI and Litigation Branch | Legal Services Division  
Department of Human Services  
[FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au)