



16 February 2017

Our reference: LEX 26376

Mr Justin Warren

By email: foi+request-3006-1f1144d4@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Warren

Your Freedom of Information request

I refer to your request received by the Department of Human Services (the **department**) on 1 February 2017 for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the **FOI Act**) to the following documents:

- '1. Documents, such as reports to management on the progress of the OCI programme, that provide a summary of the number of letters sent to payment recipients asking for more information ("Discrepancy Letters") and the value of potential debt identified in those letters.
2. Documents, such as reports to management on the progress of the OCI programme, that provide a summary of the number of debts raised against payment recipients and their value, both as a total and average.
3. Documents, such as reports to management on the progress of the OCI programme, that contain a breakdown of the number and value of debts in the following categories, each a subset of the total debts raised at that date:
 - a) Number of debts where the debt amount is determined to be exactly the same as when originally raised after response from the customer,
 - b) Number of debts where the debt amount is determined to be higher than originally raised after response from the customer, and the total or average amount of value adjustment required,
 - c) Number of debts where the debt amount is determined to be lower than originally raised after response from the customer, and the total or average amount of value adjustment required,
 - d) Number of debts where the debt amount is determined to be zero after response from the customer, and the total or average amount of debt adjustment required, For each category, the following summary totals should be provided at a minimum:
 - i) number of debts in the category
 - ii) total value of debts in the category

- iii) amount of adjustment in debt amount required compared to the original debt amount identified.

The summary totals should also be provided for the entire set of records, so that the category amounts can be compared to the total amounts'.

Your request involves too much work for the department

Your request covers a wide range of documents. We are asking you to revise your request to give us more specific details about the information you are after because of the amount of work involved for the department.

If you decide not to make any revisions I will have to refuse your FOI request as a 'practical refusal reason' exists.

For a more detailed explanation of what this means see **Attachment A**.

How to send us a 'revised request'

Before I make a final decision on your request, you can narrow the size of your original request and submit a revised request.

Within the next 14-days you must do one of the following, in writing:

- withdraw the request,
- make a revised request, or
- tell us that you do not want to revise your request.

If you do not do contact us during the 14 day consultation period, we will assume you do not want to continue with your request. See **Attachment A** for relevant sections of the FOI Act.

If you decide to make a revised request you should be more specific about what documents you actually want. This could help the department find the documents in less time and use fewer resources to process them.

We have 30 days to give you a decision about your request, however the time taken to consult with you now is not included in this 30 day time period.

Contact officer

I am the contact officer for your request. During the consultation period you are welcome to ask for my help in revising your request and filling out the form. You can contact me:

- in writing to the address at the top of this letter, or
- via email to FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au

Note: When you contact us please quote the reference number **FOI LEX 26376**.

Your response will be expected by **2 March 2017**. If no response is received, your matter will be taken as withdrawn.

Further assistance

If you have any questions please email 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

What I took into account

Because of the amount of work involved for the department, under sections 24AA(1)(a)(i), 24 and 24AA(2) of the FOI Act I intend to refuse your FOI request as a 'practical refusal reason' exists. Under the Act, the practical refusal reason is that processing your request 'would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources' of this agency.

To process your request the department would have to do extensive searches to find and process the documents you asked for. We have more than 772 documents that fall into the scope of your request, totalling over 3056 pages.

Based on my experience with the type and volume of records you want, I estimate it would take approximately 347 hours in processing time. This includes looking at all the documents to see if any of the pages might need redactions - that is, possibly blacking out some content, for example, where it contains information that, if released, would prejudice the proper and efficient conduct of the operations of the department.

Amount of time to process your request

I have calculated the number of hours it would take to process your request in full.

Search for and retrieve documents	39 hours
Examine pages for decision making at an average of 3 minutes per page	152 hours
Time of three minutes per page for about 3000 pages needing redaction	150 hours
Write statement of reasons for decision	6 hours
Total	347 hours

Relevant sections of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

Section 24AA(1)(a)(i) of the FOI Act provides that a practical refusal reason exists in relation to a FOI request if the work involved in processing the request would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the department from its other operations.

Section 24AA(2) of the FOI Act sets out certain factors which the department must consider when determining whether providing access in relation to a request would substantially and unreasonably divert the department's resources. The department must specifically have regard to the resources that would have to be used for:

- identifying, locating or collating the documents within the department's filing system;
- deciding whether to grant, refuse or defer access to a document to which the request relates, or to grant access to an edited copy of such a document, including resources that would have to be used for examining the document or consulting in relation to the request;
- making a copy, or an edited copy, of the document, and

- notifying any interim or final decision on the request.

Section 24AB(7) of the FOI Act provides that the request is taken to have been withdrawn under at the end of the consultation period if:

- the applicant does not consult the contact person during the consultation period in accordance with the notice, or
- the applicant does not do one of the things mentioned in subsection (6) before the end of the consultation period.

Section 24AB(6) says that the applicant must, before the end of the consultation period, do one of the following, by written notice to the agency or Minister:

- withdraw the request,
- make a revised request, or
- indicate that the applicant does not wish to revise the request.