



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

FOI/2017/035

By email: foi+request-3028-73ff3685@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to your email of 6 February 2017 in which you made a request to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department) under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) for:

I request documents which detail the precise remuneration paid to each of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's (the 'Department's') SES officers in the following financial years - FY2013/14, FY 2014/15 and FY2015/16. The group certificates/end-of-year PAYG payments summaries issued by the Department to each of its SES staff in those years can be quickly and easily identified and retrieved, and will efficiently and accurately provide the information the subject of my request.

I am willing to agree to the decision maker redacting information relating to the tax file numbers, the home addresses and information relating to the amount of tax withheld for each of the relevant SES officers that may be contained in the relevant documents. I am willing to further narrow the scope of my request by limiting it to officers employed by the Department who, at the time of my application, were categorised as SES officers, meaning that:

- Departmental staff who were once SES officers at the Department, but weren't categorised as such at the time of this application; and*
- the documents the subject of my request that pertain to SES officers who are no longer employed by the Department;*

are discounted from the scope of my application.

The authorised decision-maker for your request is Emma Greenwood, Chief People Officer, People Branch.

Notice of practical refusal reason

I write to advise you that, subject to possible clarification which would narrow your request, Ms Greenwood considers that the work involved in processing your request in its current form would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the Department from its other operations. This constitutes a 'practical refusal reason' under section 24AA of the FOI Act. On this basis, Ms Greenwood intends to refuse access to the documents you have requested.

However, before Ms Greenwood makes a final decision to refuse the request for a practical refusal reason, you have an opportunity to revise your request. This is called a 'request consultation process' as set out under section 24AB of the FOI Act. You have 14 days to respond to this notice in one of the ways set out below.

Reasons for intention to refuse your request

The decision maker advises that over 400 documents have been found to be in scope to your request based off initial searches. Each document contains personal information which would require officers to manually inspect and redact where personal information is contained. The decision maker has noted that the Department does publish salary information (minimum and maximum salary ranges) and the workforce profile details (including SES officer information) in the Annual Report. The Departments Annual Reports are available at www.dpmc.gov.au. Ms Greenwood considers the effort required to process your request would be a substantial and unreasonable diversion of the Department's resources.

In reaching this view, Ms Greenwood has had regard to the public interest in access to information held by the Department and considers that the public interest in access is outweighed by the fact that details relating to the number of SES officers in the Department and the salary range of these officers are publically available and competing public interest in the ability of the Department to undertake its ordinary functions without substantial impairment.

Ms Greenwood acknowledges that the processing of requests for access to documents is a legitimate part of each agency's functions, and that FOI requests may require reallocation of resources within an agency. However, Ms Greenwood considers that the Department could not reasonably divert resources to assist in processing this request.

Request consultation process

You now have an opportunity to revise your request to enable it to proceed. Revising your request can mean narrowing the scope of the request to make it more manageable or explaining in more detail the specific documents you wish to access. You may wish to focus your request on copies of the contract, value-for-money advice, invoices and correspondence relating to the finalisation of the contract.

Before the end of the consultation period, you must do one of the following, in writing:

- withdraw your request;
- make a revised request; or
- tell us that you do not wish to revise your request.

The consultation period runs for 14 days and will start on the day after you receive this notice. During this period, you are welcome to seek assistance from the contact person I have listed

below to revise your request. If you revise your request in a way that adequately addresses the practical refusal grounds outlined above, we will recommence processing it. (Please note that the time taken to consult you regarding the scope of your request is not taken into account for the purposes of the 30 day time limit for processing your request.)

If you do not do one of the three things listed above during the consultation period or you do not consult the contact person during this period, your request will be taken to have been withdrawn.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact the Department by email at foi@pmc.gov.au or by phone on 02 6271 5849.

Yours sincerely



Debbie Arnold
Senior FOI Adviser
Honours, Symbols and Legal Policy Branch

20 February 2017