



Office of the Hon Christian Porter MP
Minister for Social Services

Mr Justin Warren
Via righttoknow.org.au

By email: foi+request-3171-42cd2bbe@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Warren

Freedom of Information Request No. 16/17-017

I refer to your FOI request received by the Minister for Social Services on 27 February 2017, in which you requested access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act) to the following documents:

1. *Diary extracts listing the date, time, and duration of any and all meetings held with the Department of Human Services between 1 Jan 2016 and 31 Dec 2016, inclusive.*
2. *Meeting agendas for any and all meetings held with the Department for Human Services between 1 Jan 2016 and 31 Dec 2016, inclusive.*
3. *Minutes, and other notes for any and all meetings held with the Department for Human Services between 1 Jan 2016 and 31 Dec 2016, inclusive.*

Notice of intention to refuse your FOI request

I am writing to notify you of my intention to refuse your request under section 24 of the FOI Act.

I am satisfied that a practical refusal reason exists under subparagraph 24AA(1)(a)(ii), in that processing your request would substantially and unreasonably interfere with the performance of the Minister's functions.

Accordingly, I am initiating a request consultation process under section 24AB of the FOI Act, and I encourage you to contact the Department of Social Services within 14 days of receiving this notice to discuss your request further. The Department provides administrative assistance to FOI requests that the Minister receives.

Please note that this is not a decision on access to documents under subsection 23(1) of the FOI Act.

Substantial and unreasonable diversion of resources

In your request you sought diary extracts, agendas, minutes and other notes (which could include dot points, comments, responses etc.) relating to meetings with the Department of Human Services over a one year period. I have arranged for searches to be undertaken of the Minister's shared drives, email and calendar accounts to ascertain the number of documents that are likely to be relevant to your request and the work involved in processing your request.

I am advised that searches of the Minister's shared drives, email and calendar accounts, provided the following results:

- 150 documents that relate to the word 'agenda';
- 44 documents that relate to the word 'minutes';
- 475 documents that relate to the word 'meetings', including 166 that relate to the words 'meetings' and 'Human Services'; and
- More than 2,000 emails/calendar items sent to or from the Department of Human Services and Centrelink and/or containing the word 'minute' or 'meeting'.

To confirm that all these documents fall within the scope of your request would require staff in the Minister's Office to review each of these documents. The Minister's Office consists of a small number of staff (12 in total) who supports the Minister with the large workload of the social services portfolio.

Reviewing these documents to ascertain whether they would fall within the scope of your request would substantially and unreasonably interfere with the performance of the Minister's functions by diverting resources away from the social services portfolio.

Request consultation process

As required by section 24AB of the FOI Act, I am now writing to provide you with an opportunity to make a written submission in support of your request as currently worded, or to revise the scope of your request so that the practical refusal reason no longer exists.

You have 14 days from the day you receive this letter to contact me and do one of the following:

- a) withdraw your request;
- b) make a revised request; or
- c) indicate that you do not wish to revise the request.

Should you have any enquiries concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Department at foi@dss.gov.au. As stated above, the Department provides administrative assistance for FOI requests made to the Minister.

If you do not contact the Department within this period, your FOI request will be taken to have been withdrawn under subsection 24AB(7) and will not be dealt with any further.

If you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Department.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Gwilliam', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cheryl Gwilliam
Chief of Staff
Office of the Hon. Christian Porter MP
Minister for Social Services
29 March 2017