



16 March 2017

Our reference: LEX 27879

Mr Geordie Guy

By email: foi+request-3175-84e6df84@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Guy,

Freedom of Information Request - Charges

I refer to your request dated 27 February 2017 and received by the Department of Human Services (the **department**) on the same day for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the **FOI Act**) to the following:

'copies of any briefing information Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter, was given in advance of being on ABC's RN Breakfast on the 3rd of January this year, as well as any responses, or questions about it the minister replied with'.

Preliminary Assessment of the Charge

In accordance with section 29 of the FOI Act, I have decided that you are liable to pay a charge for the processing of your request. The preliminary assessment of that charge is \$197.10 calculated as follows:

Search and retrieval time: 5.58 hours, at \$15.00 per hour:	\$83.70
Decision-making time (*after deduction of 5 hours): 5.67 hours, at \$20.00 per hour	\$113.40

TOTAL	\$197.10
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*The FOI Act provides that the first five hours of decision-making time are free of charge and this is reflected in the calculation.

I am advised that the department has in its possession 20 documents with 79 pages relevant to your request.

Required Action

If you would like the department to continue processing your request, you must notify the department in writing within 30 days of receiving this notice that you:

- a) agree to pay the charge;
- b) wish to contend that the charge:
 - i. has been wrongly assessed; or
 - ii. should be reduced or not imposed; or
 - iii. both

c) withdraw the request for access.

If you do not provide a written response in accordance with one of Options A, B or C above within 30 days of receiving this notice, your request will be taken to have been withdrawn under section 29(2) of the FOI Act.

Alternatively you may wish to refine the scope of your FOI request. If you would like to discuss this please contact us for assistance.

Further information on options A, B and C is set out below.

Option A - pay the charge

As the charge exceeds \$100, you are required to pay a deposit of \$49.30 (25% of the total charge) within 30 days of receiving this notice. You may, of course, elect to pay the charge in full at this point.

The amount due should be paid by cheque or money order made out to the Collector of Public Monies. Please quote the reference number FOI **LEX 27879** with your payment.

Should you elect to pay the charge please email FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au once you have posted your cheque or money order to advise us of your payment.

Option B - seek reduction or non-imposition of the charge

You may contend that the charge has been wrongly assessed, or should be reduced or not imposed. Section 29(5) of the FOI Act provides that, in deciding whether to reduce or not to impose a charge, the decision-maker must take into account any relevant reasons, including whether payment of the charge, or part of it, would cause your organisation financial hardship, and whether the giving of access to the documents is in the general public interest or in the interest of a substantial section of the public.

For example, in your email dated 27 February 2017 you stated the following:

‘I further contend that this information is in the substantial public interest, and request that any fees be waived.

If you wish to contend that the charge has been wrongly assessed or should be reduced or not imposed, as you have indicated above, please set out your reasons and the evidence in support of your reasons as clearly as possible. If you believe that payment of the charge would cause your organisation financial hardship, please provide sufficient details of your financial circumstances to enable the decision-maker to make a well-informed decision in this regard.

Option C - withdraw your request

If you wish to withdraw your request you may do so in writing.

Time limits for processing your request

Section 31 of the FOI Act provides that where a notice is sent to an applicant regarding the payment of a charge in respect of a request, the time limit for processing the request is suspended from the date the notice is received until either:

- (a) the day following payment of the charge (in full or the required deposit); or
- (b) if applicable, the day following the notification to the applicant of a decision not to impose the charge.

Address for correspondence

Please send all correspondence regarding your FOI request to the following address:

Freedom of Information team
Department of Human Services
PO Box 7820
CANBERRA ACT 2610

Or by email to FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@humanservices.gov.au.

Publication of information in the FOI disclosure log

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

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