



Australian Government

Department of Finance

Reference: FOI13/132
Contact: FOI Team
Telephone: (02) 6215 1783
e-mail: foi@finance.gov.au

Luke Mansillo

via email: foi+request-449-732e60d4@righttoknow

Dear Mr Mansillo,

Freedom of Information Request – FOI13/132

Thank you for your email, dated 16 November 2013, to the Department of Finance (Finance) in which you clarified your request for access to the following under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

I seek documentation of requests by the AFP to the Department of Finance to investigation parliamentary expense claims.

I would like to confirm I am requesting parliamentary expense complaints from the 7 September 2013 which the AFP has referred to the department of finance.

I would like the names of members of the public excluded from the documents.

Liability to pay a charge

In accordance with section 29 of the FOI Act, I have decided that you are liable to pay a charge in respect of the processing of your request. My preliminary assessment of that charge is as follows:

Task	Rate	Units	Charge
Search & retrieval	\$15 per hour	2.92 hours	\$ 43.80
Decision-making	\$20 per hour	4.97 hours	\$ 99.40
<i>less first 5 hours free</i>		5 hours	\$ -100.00
Photocopies	0.10 per page	50 pages	\$ 5.00
TOTAL			\$ 48.80

In accordance with the *Freedom of Information (Charges) Regulations 1982*, this estimate has included 5 hours of decision making time free of charge.

You can agree to pay the charge. If you agree, processing of your request will resume as soon as the Department receives a payment, either in full or a deposit.

Payment in full is \$48.80. Payment in full entitles you to receive a decision in relation to your request, a schedule which lists the documents relevant to your request, and any documents released.

Regulation 12 of the Charges Regulations provides that the Department can receive a deposit. The required deposit for this request is \$12.19. Payment of a deposit entitles you to receive a decision in relation to your request and a schedule which lists the documents relevant to your request. Relevant documents would only be released on payment of the balance of charges. Regulation 14 provides a deposit paid by an applicant is not refundable unless the Department decides to waive the charge or fails to make a decision on the applicant's FOI request within the statutory time limit, including any extension.

Your cheque/money order should be made payable to the Collector of Public Monies and addressed to:

FOI Coordinator
Legal Services Branch
Department of Finance
John Gorton Building
King Edward Terrace
PARKES ACT 2600

If you wish to pay by credit card, you should forward a letter which sets out the credit card details and authorises the Department to charge that amount to the card. Please note that the department only accepts Mastercard and Visa.

In accordance with paragraph 29(1)(f) of the FOI Act, within 30 days of the date of this notice, you need to either:

- agree to pay the charge indicated above and forward the deposit; or
- contend that the charge has been wrongly assessed, or should be reduced or not imposed (you should provide full reasons for your contention); or
- withdraw your request.

If you contend that the charge has been wrongly assessed, or should be reduced or not imposed, such a contention is not a request for internal review. You will be advised of your review rights under section 54 of the FOI Act following my consideration of your contentions. In deciding whether to reduce or not impose a charge, I must, amongst other things, take into account whether payment of the charge, or part of it, would cause you financial hardship and whether the giving of access to the documents is in the general public interest.

If you fail to notify this Department in a manner described above within 30 days of the date on this notice, it will be taken that you have withdrawn your request.

Please note that should you forward a deposit in accordance with section 29 of the FOI Act, you will then accept liability for settlement of the debt with the Department upon completion of processing the FOI request. The outstanding charge amount is a debt created in favour of the Commonwealth and therefore, Finance is obliged to pursue recovery of the debt in accordance with the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

Processing Time

In relation to the preliminary assessment of charges, in accordance with section 31 of the FOI Act, the time period for processing your request is suspended from the date of this notice and resumes on either day you pay the deposit or the day on which Finance makes a decision not to impose a charge. However, the actual processing time may also be affected by third party consultation.

Policy to exclude junior departmental officer contact details

Finance has adopted a policy to generally exclude the names and contact details of junior staff (non-SES officers) from any documents released under FOI. Finance's preference is to reach agreement with FOI applicants to exclude these details from the scope of the request. Where there is no objection, the names and contact details of junior officers are redacted under section 22 of the FOI Act, on the basis that these details are irrelevant to the request.

Publication

The FOI Act requires Commonwealth agencies to publish:

- information in documents to which the agency routinely gives access in response to FOI requests except where that information is exempt under the FOI Act; and
- information in documents released under the FOI Act.

Subject to certain exceptions, any documents provided to you under the FOI Act will be published on Finance's FOI Disclosure Log (www.finance.gov.au) as soon as possible after they are released to you, usually 1 – 2 working days.

Please contact the FOI Team on the above contact details if you wish to discuss your request.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Hawley
Principal Legal Officer
Legal and Strategic Support Branch
26 November 2013