



4 December 2018

Mr J Gothe-Snape

**BY EMAIL:** [foi+request-4947-f42501fe@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-4947-f42501fe@righttoknow.org.au)

**In reply please quote:**

FOI Request: FA 18/11/00692

File Number: ADF2018/227104

Dear Mr Gothe-Snape

**Freedom of Information (FOI) request - Access Decision**

On 13 November 2018, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) received a request for access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act).

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a decision on your request for access under the FOI Act.

**1 Scope of request**

You have requested access to the following documents:

*The latest WhatsApp message sent by the Minister of Home Affairs, including who it was sent to, when it was sent and the content of the message.*

**2 Authority to make decision**

I am an officer authorised under section 23 of the FOI Act to make decisions in respect of requests to access documents or to amend or annotate records.

**3 Relevant material**

In reaching my decision I referred to the following:

- the terms of your request
- the FOI Act
- Guidelines published by the Office of the Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the FOI Guidelines)

#### 4 Documents in scope of request

Section 4 of the FOI Act provides that:

*a document is a document of an agency if ... the document is in the possession of the agency, whether created in the agency or received in the agency;*

and

*official document of a Minister or official document of the Minister means a document that is in the possession of a Minister, or that is in the possession of the Minister concerned, as the case requires, in his or her capacity as a Minister, being a document that relates to the affairs of an agency or of a Department of State and, for the purposes of this definition, a Minister shall be deemed to be in possession of a document that has passed from his or her possession if he or she is entitled to access to the document and the document is not a document of an agency.*

You are seeking access to information that does not exist for the purposes of the FOI Act. The application *WhatsApp* is not installed on the Minister's Department issued mobile device.

As such having regard to your request and the types of documents that may fall within the scope of your request I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate any document relevant to your request.

#### 5 Decision

Section 24A of the FOI Act provides that the Department may refuse a request for access to a document if all reasonable steps have been taken to find the document and the Department is satisfied that the document does not exist.

I am satisfied that no documents relevant to your request were in the possession of the Department on 13 November 2018 when your FOI request was received. As such I am refusing access to the documents requested by you based on the application of section 24A of the FOI Act.

#### 6 Legislation

A copy of the FOI Act is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00251>. If you are unable to access the legislation through this website, please contact our office for a copy.

#### 7 Your Review Rights

##### Internal Review

If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to apply for an internal review by the Department of this decision. Any request for internal review must be provided to the Department within 30 days of you being notified of the decision. Where possible please attach reasons why you believe a review of the decision is necessary. The internal review will be carried out by an officer other than the original decision maker and the Department must make a review decision within 30 days.

Applications for review should be sent to:

By email to: [foi.reviews@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:foi.reviews@homeaffairs.gov.au)

OR

By mail to:  
Freedom of Information Section  
Department of Home Affairs  
PO Box 25  
BELCONNEN ACT 2617

*Review by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner*

You may apply directly to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) for a review of this decision. You must apply in writing within 60 days of this notice. For further information about review rights and how to submit a request for a review to the OAIC, please see Fact Sheet 12 "Freedom of information – Your review rights", available online at <http://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/foi-reviews>.

## **8 Making a Complaint**

You may complain to the Australian Information Commissioner about action taken by the Department in relation to your request.

Your enquiries to the Australian Information Commissioner can be directed to:

Phone 1300 363 992 (local call charge)

Email [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)

There is no particular form required to make a complaint to the Australian Information Commissioner. The request should be in writing and should set out the grounds on which it is considered that the action taken in relation to the request should be investigated and identify the Department of Home Affairs as the relevant agency.

## **9 Contacting the FOI Section**

Should you wish to discuss this decision, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Section at [foi@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:foi@homeaffairs.gov.au).



**Authorised Decision Maker  
Department of Home Affairs**