



Our reference: RQ20/03837
Agency reference: 38581

Ms Penny Imnes

Sent by email: foi+request-6791-f492e7a5@righttoknow.org.au

Extension of time under s 15AB

Dear Ms Imnes

On 10 November 2020, the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (the Department) applied for further time to make a decision on your FOI request of 12 October 2020 under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (the FOI Act).

This application is on the basis that the processing period is insufficient to deal adequately with your request, because it is complex.

The Department attempted to obtain an agreement under s 15AA of the FOI Act for an extension of time from you. The Department did not receive a response from you.

Contact with you

On 12 November 2020, I wrote to you to seek your view on the Department’s application. You responded to my inquiries and provided comments which I have taken into consideration, including that:

I believe the Department is still locating three Labour Hire Contracts I requested.

These contracts have no confidentiality issues and I see no complexity in retrieving the three relatively routine contracts.

I do understand things can take time, I believe an extra 7 days is appropriate, which would be the 18 November 2020.

Decision

As a delegate of the Information Commissioner, I am authorised to make decisions on applications for extensions of time under s 15AB of the FOI Act.



I have decided to grant the Department an extension of time under s 15AB(2) of the FOI Act **to 11 December 2020**. I am satisfied that the Department's application for an extension of time is justified, because the request is complex. My reasons follow:

- Services Australia has advised that the initial processing of the request was complex due to the terms of the request which made it difficult to identify the relevant business area.
- Since the revision of the scope on 29 October 2020, the Department has consulted with the relevant business areas.
- The Department has received documents relating to two points of your FOI request and are awaiting documents for another two points.
- The relevant business area encountered some complexities in identifying and retrieving the requested documents and are in the process of collating the documents.

I have considered your request that the Department is granted a 7 day extension until 18 November 2020 as you do not consider the document process to be complex in nature. Based on the information currently before the OAIC, I am satisfied that the Department's request for an extension of time until 11 December 2020 is required to process your FOI request including collating documents.

Contact

If you have any questions about this email, please contact me on 02 9284 9625 or via email avanithah.selvarajah@oaic.gov.au. In all correspondence please include OAIC reference number at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Avanithah Selvarajah
Review and Investigations Adviser
Freedom of Information

17 November 2020

Review rights

If you disagree with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's (OAIC) decision you can apply to the Federal Court of Australia or the Federal Circuit Court for a review of a decision of the Information Commissioner if you think that a decision by the Information Commissioner to grant an extension of time is not legally correct. You can make this application under the *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977*.

The Court will not review the merits of your case but it may refer the matter back to the Information Commissioner for further consideration if it finds the decision was wrong in law or the Information Commissioner's powers were not exercised properly.

An application for review must be made to the Court within 28 days of the OAIC sending the decision to you. You may wish to seek legal advice as the process can involve fees and costs. Please contact the Federal Court registry in your state or territory for more information, or visit the Federal Court website at <http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/>.

Further information

Further information about how applications to extend the timeframe to process an FOI request are handled by the OAIC can be found published on our website:

For FOI applicants: [How to make an FOI request: Extensions of time](#)

For agencies and ministers: [Guidance and advice: Extension of time for processing requests](#)

The OAIC has the power to investigate complaints about an agency's actions under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act). This is a separate process from asking for an Information Commissioner review following a decision made under the FOI Act. Complaints usually focus on how an agency has handled your FOI request or complied with other obligations under the FOI Act, rather than the decision itself.

In some cases, the Information Commissioner's investigation of a complaint may lead to the agency addressing the issues that you have complained about. In other cases, the Information Commissioner may make suggestions or recommendations that the agency should implement. The Information Commissioner can only make non-binding recommendations as a result of a complaint. You and the agency will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

FOI complaints to the OAIC must be made in writing. Our preference is for you to use the [online FOI complaint form](#) if at all possible.

Further information about how to make a complaint can be found published on our website: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/make-an-foi-complaint/>.