



Our reference: RQ21/02271
Agency reference: FA21/02/01000

Ned

By email: foi+request-7079-d11cbc40@righttoknow.org.au

Extension of time under s 54D

Dear Ned

On 17 August 2021, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) advised this office that it had not made a decision on your internal review request of 14 July 2021 within the statutory period provided by the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (the FOI Act). Consequently, the FOI Act deems that the Department has refused your internal review request and affirmed its original decision.

However, section 54D of the FOI Act allows the Information Commissioner to extend the processing time for an internal review where the initial decision period has ended and the agency or Minister has not provided the applicant with notice of a decision. The Department has applied for further time to make a decision on your internal review request.

Decision

As a delegate of the Information Commissioner, I am authorised to make decisions on applications for extensions of time under s 54D of the FOI Act.

I have decided to grant the Department further time to **27 August 2021** to process your request for an internal review. My reasons and considerations follow:

- the Department has advised the OAIC that:
 - this internal review relates to an FOI request for documents relating to statistical data and instructions regarding the Department's processing of family visa applications in the last 12 months
 - you have advised the Department that you are of the view that the statistics provided in response to your FOI request do not cover certain points that you had requested, and
 - the Department's FOI team have requested the relevant business area review the material provided in response to your FOI request and consider the issues you have raised in your internal review application.

This extension of time under s 54D of the FOI Act means that the deemed affirmation of the original decision is taken never to have applied if the Department makes a decision on your request by 27 August 2021.

Such an extension can only be granted once and cannot be extended by a variation.

If you do not review an internal review decision by 27 August 2021, you may wish to seek Information Commissioner review of the Department's deemed affirmation of its original decision [here](#). Further information on [applying for IC review](#) is available on the OAIC [website](#).

Contact

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me on (02) 9284 9721 or via email shelley.napper@oaic.gov.au. In all correspondence please include OAIC reference RQ21/02271.

Yours sincerely



Shelley Napper
Assistant Director
FOI Regulatory Group

18 August 2021

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/>.