



FOI Reference: LEX4553

File No: 21/29086

12 November 2021

Mr Gareth William Smith

By email: [foi+request-7971-680658ax@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx](mailto:foi+request-7971-680658ax@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx)

Dear Mr Smith

***Freedom of Information Request – notification of intention to refuse request***

Thank you for your email dated 17 October 2021, in which you sought access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act).

I am writing to inform you that preliminary searches by the department have identified a large volume of material that would require assessment to determine whether it is suitable for release, the processing of which we assess (for the reasons set out below) would constitute a substantial and unreasonable diversion of the department's resources from its other operations. On this basis, I intend to refuse to grant access to the documents captured by your request.

However, you are welcome to revise the scope of your request in line with section 24AB(2)(e) of the Act, in order so that it might be processed.

**Notice of intended practical refusal**

On 17 October 2021, you sought access to:

*“All communications between DFAT and World Vision in respect of Mohammad El Halabi.”*

In accordance with section 24AB(2) of the Act, I am providing you notice of my intention to refuse to grant access to the documents captured by your request.

The reason for the proposed practical refusal is that the work involved in processing the request as it currently stands would substantially and unreasonably divert the department's resources from its other operations.

In making this assessment, I have had regard to the time and resources required to process the request, pursuant to section 24AA(2) of the Act, including the resources involved in collating documents, examining the documents, consulting with third parties, and redacting material from the documents. I have been assisted in this task to date by staff in the Middle East Branch and the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv.

Preliminary searches have captured approximately 320 pages of material that would need to be assessed to determine whether it is suitable for release.

Consultations would potentially be required with multiple third parties external to the department, given the subject of the materials requested.

For these reasons, I am of the view that processing your request in its current form would be a substantial and unreasonable diversion of the department's resources from its other operations under section 24AA(1) of the Act.

### **Consultation to revise the scope of the request**

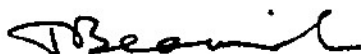
Pursuant to section 24AB(2)(e) of the Act, you have 14 days from the day you are given this notice to: (a) withdraw your request; (b) revise the scope of your request; or (c) inform the department that you do not wish to revise your request.

I invite you to contact me ([xxx@xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:xxx@xxx.xxx.xx)) should you wish to revise the request in order that it may be processed. I am happy to take any reasonable steps to provide you, so far as is reasonably practicable, with any information to assist you in doing so.

Please note that under section 24AB(7) of the Act, if you do not take an opportunity to consult with the department within 14 days, your request will be considered to have been withdrawn.

Please also be aware that during this period of consultation, the statutory timeframe under section 15(5) of the Act for the processing of your request is on hold (see section 24AB(8) of the Act for details). I have attached a copy of sections 24, 24AA and 24AB of the Act for your information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Beamish', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Beamish  
Director  
Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section