



5 November 2021

Martin Steven

**BY EMAIL:** [foi+request-7982-9cddffd9@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-7982-9cddffd9@righttoknow.org.au)

**In reply please quote:**

FOI Request: FA 21/10/00691

File Number: OBJ2021/30843

Dear Martin Steven

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

On 18 October 2021, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) received a request for access to document 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 document:

- A) *The total number of applicants, as of 18th October 2021, that have been approved for Australian citizenship and are waiting to attend a Citizenship Ceremony in the Sunshine Coast Council area.*
- B) *The current wait time between citizenship approval and ceremony in the Sunshine Coast Council area.*

**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 document or to amend or annotate records.

**3 Relevant material**

In reaching my decision I referred to the following:

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

- advice from Departmental officers with responsibility for matters relating to the document to which you sought access

#### **4 Document in scope of request**

In regards to Part A of your request, the Department has used its computer system to produce one document that contains information that falls within the scope of your request in accordance with section 17 of the FOI Act. The data produced in the document existed in the possession of the Department on 18 October 2021 when your FOI request was received.

In regards to Part B of your request, due to the evolving COVID-19 situation across Australia, the Department of Home Affairs (the Department) recognises that many councils may be constrained in holding citizenship ceremonies. To assist local government councils in continuing to welcome new citizens into their community and to manage demand for citizenship ceremonies, the Department has encouraged councils to move to online citizenship ceremonies where COVID-19 restrictions are in place and in-person citizenship ceremonies currently cannot take place. Information on citizenship processing times, including between the point of approval and ceremony, can be found on the Department's website at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/citizenship-processing-times>

#### **5 Decision**

The decision in relation to the document in the possession of the Department which falls within the scope of your request is as follows:

- Release one document in full
- Refuse Part B of your request
- Section 4(1)(d) of the FOI Act provides that a document for the purpose of the FOI Act does not include material maintained for reference purposes that is otherwise publicly available. If the Department did hold any documents falling within the scope of Part B of your request, I consider that you would not be entitled to access to those documents, in accordance with section 4(1)(d) of the FOI Act

#### **6 Legislation**

A copy of the FOI Act is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562>. 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 <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/information-commissioner-review/>.

## **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).

Yours sincerely

***[signed electronically]***

Kel  
Position No 60100052  
Authorised Decision Maker  
Department of Home Affairs