



10 March 2022

Our reference: LEX 66792

Mr Bruno Petrovski

By email: [foi+request-8509-fee247ef@righttoknow.org.au](mailto:foi+request-8509-fee247ef@righttoknow.org.au)

Dear Mr Petrovski

### **Your Freedom of Information Enquiry**

I refer to your correspondence to Services Australia (the agency) dated 24 February 2022. Your correspondence stated:

I would like a spreadsheet dating from 2015 - now which shows the % of overpayments collected from receiving parents as a result of the paying parent overpaying whether by fault or CSA's clumsy calculations.

I would also like a comparison of the %'s of both genders males and females.

I would also like any documents/notes/memos/guidelines/policies or otherwise which sets out the guides for collecting overpayments.

### **Your request is invalid**

In its current form, your correspondence does not meet the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The FOI Act provides a right of access to documents which are in the possession of the agency. Part of your correspondence appears to be seeking access to statistical information rather than specific documents

Section 15(2)(b) of the FOI Act requires that, for a request to be valid, it must provide such information concerning the documents sought as is reasonably necessary to enable a responsible officer of Services Australia to identify those documents.

The second part of your correspondence is very broad and your use of terms such as 'guidelines', 'policies or otherwise' does not clarify which specific types of documents you are seeking access to. As your correspondence does not sufficiently identify the documents requested, it does not provide sufficient information to enable relevant officers of the agency to conduct relevant searches.

For the reasons outlined above, we consider your request to be invalid.

### **Assistance with making a valid FOI request**

If you would like to make a valid FOI request, section 15 of the FOI Act provides the criteria for making a valid request. Specifically, the request should:

- be in writing and state that it is for the purposes of the FOI Act
- have a return address, and
- relevantly, be a request for specific documents with enough information to enable the agency to identify them.

## Requesting statistical information

Part of your correspondence was seeking access to certain statistical information and data.

For your information, the agency has arrangements in place for the purchase of statistical information and data without the need for a FOI request.

Please note initial investigations have identified that the agency is unlikely to be able to extract data containing the full level of detail requested in your correspondence.

General guidance on how to access statistical data related to Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support is available online and can be accessed at the following hyperlink:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/statistical-information-and-data?context=1>.

## Publicly available information

It appears that some of the documents you are seeking are publicly available.

Part of your correspondence was seeking agency policy or process documents relating to collecting Child Support overpayments.

The agency makes a large amount of operational information available for free on our public facing Operational Blueprint website. You can access this website here:

<https://operational.servicesaustralia.gov.au/public/home.html>.

To assist you I have also provided some hyperlinks to specific Operational Blueprint documents below which may contain the information you are seeking:

- Collection 277-04000000  
<https://operational.servicesaustralia.gov.au/public/Pages/separated-parents/277-04000000-01.html>
- Application for Child Support to be collected 277-04030000  
<https://operational.servicesaustralia.gov.au/public/Pages/separated-parents/277-04030000-03.html>
- Collecting child support payments privately and/or discharging arrears 277-04090000  
<https://operational.servicesaustralia.gov.au/public/Pages/separated-parents/277-04090000-03.html>
- Collection of child support debts through third parties (s72A and s72AC) 277-04100000  
<https://operational.servicesaustralia.gov.au/public/Pages/separated-parents/277-04100000-01.html>

## Further assistance

If you have any questions please email [FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:FOI.LEGAL.TEAM@servicesaustralia.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Colette  
Authorised FOI Decision Maker  
Freedom of Information Team  
Information Access Branch | Legal Services Division  
Services Australia