



Australian Government

Department of Health

Department Reference: FOI 3658

Mr Andrew Smith

Via email: foi+request-8544-5da70807@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Smith

NOTICE OF DECISION

I refer to your request of 3 March 2022 to the Digital Transformation Agency, seeking access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the FOI Act), in the following terms:

For the purposes of this request, the term "COVID-19 WhatsApp channel" refers to the WhatsApp account used by the Department of Health and managed by DTA whose details are published at the following URL:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/australian-government-whatsapp-channel-for-covid-19>.

This request made under the FOI Act 1982 requests a document or documents which:

- show the average monthly or yearly IT cost required for operation of the COVID-19 WhatsApp channel
- show the MAU figure of the COVID-19 WhatsApp channel (number of users who used the channel every month, broken down by month and year) - scope of this request is for the time period January 2020 (or from the time the channel was created, whichever is later) to the time of this request.

On 4 March 2022, the Digital Transformation Agency advised you that your request was transferred to the Department of Health (the department) for processing and decision.

Decision

I am authorised under subsection 23(1) of the FOI Act to make decisions in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. I am writing to notify you of my decision on your request.

As the information you seek is not available in discrete form in a written document of the department, I have caused a document to be created under section 17 of the FOI Act from the department's computer systems containing the data you have requested. The document is set out in the schedule at Attachment A.

I am satisfied that appropriate steps have been taken to identify the data you have requested, including searches of departmental computer systems.

I have decided to give access to the document in full.

FOI review rights

If you are dissatisfied with my decision, you may apply for a review.

Internal review

Under section 54 of the FOI Act, you may apply for internal review of this decision.

In accordance with section 54B of the FOI Act, an application for internal review must be made in writing within 30 days after the day you are notified of this decision (or such further period as the department allows). To assist in the internal review process, please provide reasons you consider the review of my decision is necessary.

The internal review will be carried out by another officer of this department within 30 days of receipt of your application.

An application for an internal review should be addressed to:

Email: FOI@health.gov.au
Mail: FOI Unit (MDP 516)
Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Information Commissioner review

Alternatively, under section 54L of the FOI Act, you may apply to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) for review of my decision by the Information Commissioner (IC).

In accordance with subsection 54S(1) of the FOI Act, an IC review application in relation to a decision covered by subsection 54L(2) (access refusal decisions) must be made in writing within 60 days after the day you are notified of this decision (if you do not request an internal review).

More information about IC review is available on the OAIC website at:

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews/>

The OAIC can be contacted by:

Email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 363 992

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with actions taken by the department, you may also make a complaint.

Complaint to the department

Complaints to the department are covered by the department's privacy policy. A form for lodging a complaint directly to the department is available on the department's website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints>

Complaint to the IC

Information about making a complaint to the IC about action taken by the department is available on the OAIC website:

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/make-an-foi-complaint/>

Relevant provisions

The FOI Act, including the provisions referred to in this letter, can be accessed from the Federal Register of Legislation website:

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00056>

Publication

You should be aware that where I have decided to release documents to you, the department may also publish the released material on its Disclosure Log. The department will however, not publish information (such as personal or business information) where it would be unreasonable to do so.

For your reference the department's Disclosure Log can be found at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/foi-disclosure-log>

Contacts

If you require clarification of any of the matters discussed in this letter you should contact the Freedom of Information Unit at FOI@health.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'D. Naughton', written over a faint horizontal line.

Dale Naughton
Assistant Secretary
Analytics & Reporting Branch
Digital Transformation and Delivery Division

3 April 2022

ATTACHMENT A**SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS - FOI 3658**

Doc No.	Pages	Description	Decision on access
1	1	Average IT Monthly Costs and average monthly users for the COVID-19 WhatsApp Channel - 29 March 2020 to 4 March 2022*	Release in full

* 4 March 2022 is the day after the FOI request was received by the Digital Transformation Agency.