



Mr Mitchel Bradley

Via email: foi+request-8960-a7dacd1d@righttoknow.org.au

Dear Mr Bradley

Decision on your Freedom of Information request

I refer to your request received by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (**department**) on 29 May 2022 for access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (**FOI Act**) to the following documents:

'I am seeking access, under the FOI act, to the document(s) identified as: DR 07920, On-site domestic wastewater management.

To assist you in locating this document:

- * The document was issued in draft form for comment as DR 07920
- * The document may be identified as, or as a draft of, AS 1547 or AS/NZS 1547:2012.
- * The document may be identified as "On-site domestic wastewater management"
- * The document was subsequently published as AS/NZS 1547:2012 on 27th February 2012.
- * The document was prepared by "Joint Technical Committee WS-013, On-site Domestic Wastewater Management" or "Joint Technical Committee WS-013, On-set Domestic Wastewater Management"
- * It's my understanding that your preceding department "Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities" was represented on "Joint Technical Committee WS-013, On-set Domestic Wastewater Management"
- * The document may have been published on the 21/12/2007.
- * The document was a revision of AS/NZS 1547:2000.'

My decision

I have decided to refuse your request for access to documents under section 24A of the FOI Act on the basis that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate the documents you have requested and I am satisfied that they do not exist.

Please see **Attachment A** for the reasons for my decision.

You can ask for a review of my decision

If you wish to seek an internal review, you must apply to the department within **30 days** after the day you are notified of this decision. An application for internal review must be made in writing by post to the FOI Officer or email to foi@awe.gov.au.

Alternatively, you may apply directly to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (**OAIC**) to review my decision. An application for review by the Information Commissioner must be made in writing within **60 days** after the day you are notified of this decision. You can also make a complaint to the Information Commissioner if you have concerns about how the department handled your request.

You can find information about requesting a review, making a complaint, and other information about FOI on the OAIC website www.oaic.gov.au or phone the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

Further assistance

If you have any questions, please email foi@awe.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Finn', written in a cursive style.

Marcus Finn
Assistant Secretary
Water Division
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
16 June 2022

ATTACHMENT A

REASONS FOR DECISION

What you have requested

'I am seeking access, under the FOI act, to the document(s) identified as: DR 07920, On-site domestic wastewater management.

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The department acknowledged your request on 1 June 2022.

What I took into account

In reaching my decision, I took into account:

- your request dated 29 May 2022;
- information about:
 - the nature of the documents that you have requested; and
 - the department's operating environment and functions;
- guidelines issued by the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (**Guidelines**); and
- the FOI Act.

Reasons for my decision

I am authorised to make decisions under section 23(1) of the FOI Act.

Section 24A of the FOI Act

Section 24A of the FOI Act provides that:

- (1) An agency or Minister may refuse a request for access to a document if:

- (a) all reasonable steps have been taken to find the document; and
- (b) the agency or Minister is satisfied that the document:
 - (i) is in the agency's or Minister's possession but cannot be found; or
 - (ii) does not exist.

Staff from the Water Division and Environment Protection Division conducted searches of computer drives and folders, email records, hard copy files and available document management systems in relation to the 'DR 07920, On-site domestic wastewater management' document, along with all other key terms in your request. These searches did not identify any relevant documents, files or drafts that are currently in the department's possession.

A reference to the document AS/NZS 1547:2012 was found from a search of this key term in the SPIRE document management system. However, this is linked to a document that is available for purchase through the Standards Australia webpage and through other online vendors. The department does not have a copy of this document in its possession.

Further web-based searches from staff indicated that, in addition to AS/ NZS 1547:2012, both 'DR 07920, On-site domestic wastewater management' and 'AS/NZS 1547:2000' are also available on the Standards Australia webpage. However, it does not appear that the document 'DR 07920, On-site domestic wastewater management' is available for purchase.

The Standards Australia webpage can be accessed through the following link:
<https://www.standards.org.au/>

With respect to the Joint Technical Committee WS-013, I confirm that the department does not hold membership on this committee and that this has long since lapsed (likely around September 2013 when the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities became the Department of the Environment). Staff from the Water Division and the Environment Protection Division were not able to find any further relevant documents, files or information on this matter.

On the basis of this information and these searches, I am satisfied that the department does not hold any documents within the scope of your request.

In accordance with section 24A of the FOI Act, I am further satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to find the documents and that the documents do not exist (to the extent that the department is not in possession of them).