



Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

FOI reference: FOI 4126

Mr Oliver Smith

Right to Know

By Email: foi+request-9665-0f98f0xx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx

Dear Mr Smith

Decision on your Freedom of Information Request

I refer to your request of 6 December 2022, to the Department of Health and Aged Care (the department), seeking access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)* (FOI Act) to:

information about the ending of the Cashless Debit Card program, in the following areas

Ceduna and surrounding regions, South Australia East Kimberley region, Western Australia Goldfields region, Western Australia Bundaberg and Hervey Bay region, Queensland

For the period May 22, 2022 to the present.

I am seeking any reports or data, about:

Changes in the incidence of alcohol related hospitalisations and/or matters requiring medical attention in areas where the cashless debit card was trialled.

Changes in the incidence of alcohol consumption in areas where the cashless debit card was trialled.

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

FOI decision

The right to request access to a document in accordance with the FOI Act relates to documents in the possession of the department (section 4 (definition of 'document of an agency') refers).

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.

The relevant business area within the department has conducted searches of the department's information holdings, including HPE Content Manager (TRIM), and the Parliamentary Document Management System (PDMS). No documents matching the description in your request were identified as being in the possession of the department.

Based on these searches, I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to find the documents and the documents do not exist in the possession of the department.

I am refusing your request in accordance with section 24A of the FOI Act as the department does not hold the documents you have requested.

Additional information

The department has located publicly available information regarding the Cashless Debit Card program in the regions identified in the scope of your request, which can be found on the Department of Social Services' website: <https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/programmes-services/welfare-conditionality/cashless-debit-card-overview>. We suggest you contact the Freedom of Information section at the Department of Social Services, who may be able to assist you further with your request.

Legislative provisions

The FOI Act, including the provisions referred to in my decision, are available on the Federal Register of Legislation website: www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A02562.

Your review rights

I have set out your review rights at **ATTACHMENT A**.

Contacts

If you require clarification of any matters discussed in this letter, you can contact the FOI Section on (02) 6289 1666 or at FOI@health.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'nr', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Belinda Roberts
Assistant Secretary
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Branch
Population Health Division

20 December 2022

ATTACHMENT A.

YOUR REVIEW RIGHTS

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

Internal review

You can request internal review within 30 days of you receiving this decision. An internal review will be conducted by a different officer from the original decision-maker.

No particular form is required to apply for review although it will assist your case to set out the grounds on which you believe that the original decision should be changed.

Applications for internal review can be made by:

Email: xxx@xxxxxxx.xxx.xx
Mail: FOI Unit (MDP 516)
Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601

If you choose to seek an internal review, you will also have a right to apply for an Information Commissioner review (IC review) of the internal review decision once it has been provided to you.

Information Commissioner review or complaint

You also have the right to seek an Information Commissioner (IC) review of this decision. For FOI applicants, an application for IC review must be made in writing within 60 days of the decision.

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your FOI request, you can lodge a complaint with the OAIC. However, the OAIC suggests that complaints are made to the agency in the first instance.

While there is no particular form required to make a complaint to the OAIC, the complaint should be in writing and set out the reasons for why you are dissatisfied with the way your request was processed. It should also identify the Department of Health and Aged Care as the agency about which you are complaining.

You can make an IC review application or make an FOI complaint in one of the following ways:

- online at www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/reviews-and-complaints/
- via email to xxxxx@xxxx.xxx.xx
- by mail to GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001, or
- by fax to 02 9284 9666.

More information about the Information Commissioner reviews and complaints is available on the OAIC website here: www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/foi-review-process.

Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with action taken by the department, you may also make a complaint directly 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 here: www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints.