



GS Lakes

Via email: foi+request-11595-3ae76cfb@righttoknow.org.au

Good afternoon

Freedom of Information Request 51010 – Notice of intention to refuse

I refer to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)* request made to the Department of Social Services (**the Department**) on 1 July 2024. The request seeks access to:

..any documents or updates that relate to the number of government payment recipients who have died, categorised by payment type, including but not limited to the following:

- ABSTUDY
- Age Pension
- Blind Pension
- Carer Allowance
- Carer Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Mobility Allowance
- Newstart Allowance/JobSeeker Payment
- Youth Allowance
- Youth Disability Supplement

Much like previous FOI 2122-068, I request a monthly summation of this mortality data, but for the period January 2003 to present. Including the number of 'mortality exits'/death-related cancellations of payments, total recipients in each payment category at the time, and the percentage of total recipients these 'mortality exits' represent.

I request a further and separate category breakdown of this payment type categorised mortality data by whether said recipient was known to:

- *be an NDIS participant (for applicable time ranges), and/or*
- *known to have a psychosocial disability, diagnosis, or impairment.*

(Be that through relevant data matching, from their application for a relevant payment whether successful or not, or via a note on their file to this effect.)

If possible, another further and separate category breakdown of this NDIS-participant-and-or-psychosocial-disability mortality data by whether depression and/or cPTSD/trauma and/or self-harm/suicidality potential was noted or recorded. Or, if possible, by particular type of psychosocial disability/diagnosis/impairment known/noted on file, including but not limited to: anxiety, autism, ADHD, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, cPTSD/trauma, depression, dissociative disorder, mood disorder, OCD, paranoia, phobia, psychosis, schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorders, and so on.

I am authorised to make decisions in respect of FOI requests under subsection 23(1) of the FOI Act.

Practical refusal reason

This request generally seeks the mortality rate of government payment recipients by identified category from 2003 to present year.

To produce the data as it has been requested, the Department's relevant business area would be required to undertake a bespoke data extraction process and write further bespoke code or algorithms to interpret and split the data into the various categories. The Department would also need to undertake manual quality assessment of the data across all categories. It has been estimated that it could take a number of months to produce the data, if available, in the form requested.

I consider that the Department has limited capacity to process a request of this size, giving particular to the bespoke nature of the data being sought. For this reason, the work involved in processing the request would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the Department from its other operations.

In accordance with s 24(1) of the FOI Act, I consider that a practical refusal reason exists in relation to the request for access to documents.

Request consultation process

Under section 24(1)(b) of the FOI Act, the Department is required to provide you with the opportunity to revise the scope of your request so that a 'practical refusal reason' no longer exists. One way you could achieve this is to refine the scope of your request, for example to either of the below options:

Option 1

'The number of death-related cancellations of the following government payments, by month for 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023:

- *ABSTUDY*
- *Age Pension*
- *Carer Allowance*
- *Carer Payment*
- *Disability Support Pension*
- *Mobility Allowance*
- *Newstart Allowance/JobSeeker Payment*
- *Youth Allowance*

Option 2

'The number of death-related cancellations of the following government payments, by year for 2004 to 2023:

- *ABSTUDY*
- *Age Pension*
- *Carer Allowance*
- *Carer Payment*
- *Disability Support Pension*
- *Mobility Allowance*
- *Newstart Allowance/JobSeeker Payment*
- *Youth Allowance*

Please note that refining the scope of the request may remove the practical refusal reason, but does not necessarily mean that any documents subject to the request will be released in part or in full.

Next steps

Should you wish to revise the request, you must do so **within 14 days** after the day you are sent this notice. The 14 day deadline ends at **11:59pm on Friday 26 July 2024** by which time you are required to take one of the below actions. If you are unable to meet this deadline and require an extension of time to discuss ways to revise the scope of your request, please contact the FOI Section by email at foi@dss.gov.au.

In accordance with subsection 24AB(6) of the FOI Act, you must, before the end of the 14-day consultation period, do one of the following by written notice to the department:

- a) withdraw the request;
- b) make a revised request; or
- c) indicate that you do not wish to revise the request.

Please note that under subsection 24AB(7), the request is taken to have been withdrawn at the end of the 14 day consultation period if:

- a) the applicant does not consult the contact person during the consultation period in accordance with this notice; or
- b) the applicant does not do one of the things mentioned in subsection(6) before the end of the consultation period.

In accordance with subsection 24AB(8) of the FOI Act, the 14-day consultation period is to be disregarded in calculating the processing period for the request.

Yours sincerely



Sarah B
Authorised FOI Decision Maker
12 July 2024